COMPARISON OF SEVEN INTRAVENOUS
ANAESTHETIC AGENTS IN MAN

Sir,—Drs. Wyant, Dobkin and Aasheim, reporting (Brit. J. Anaesth., 29, 194) a series of experiments on five volunteers with intravenous anaesthesia state: "Because of its more detrimental effects, especially on respiration, hexobarbitone cannot be recommended."

A great number of people would not agree with them on that point and it is noteworthy that Drs. Dobkin and Wyant, two months later in the Canadian Anaesthetists Society Journal, publishing the same experiments on the same volunteers enhanced by two more subjects state, "Hexobarbital: The mean period of apnoea with this drug was 7 seconds with the mean dose of 517 mg/M². There was virtually no depression of the respiration or the metabolic rate"; and they go on to state, "on the whole hexobarbital had far less effect on either respiration or haemodynamics than thiopental and thiamylal for the corresponding state"; and later on, "all drugs significantly depressed oxygen consumption except hexobarbital"; and finally, "venous pressure was also reduced by all the drugs by at least 15 per cent with the least changes observed with hexobarbital and buthalitone."

These latter findings are more in accord with my observations (Ruddell, J. S. (1955), Brit. med. J., 2, 972) and others (Morley, A. H. (1955), Brit. med. J., 2, 1353; Blair Gould, R. (1956), Brit. med. J., 1, 48; Mushin, W. W. (1954), Anaesthesia, 9, 234; Blair Gould, R. (1955), Anaesthesia, 10, 91), and it would be interesting to know if hexobarbitone was the drug to which they were referring in your journal, and if it was, what the observations were on the last two subjects which so reversed their conclusions on the previous five.

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