

## Happiness Through Health A Better Drug For Hypertension, "The Silent Killer"

By Otto McClarrin

A unique new drug aimed at controlling high blood pressure is creating excitement in the industry as well as on the market place. Behind that fervor is the conviction that the drug, called captopril, marks a milestone in pharmaceutical research and could be a prototype for a group of high specific drugs targeted to a variety of diseases.

The experts say what sets captopril apart from other drugs is that it works in a highly specific way against an enzyme that is one step in the body's intricate hormone system for regulating blood pressure. Unlike natural chemicals that block enzyme actions, captopril can be taken orally and is not destroyed in the stomach. Most significantly, it is a potent molecule that was synthesized to have exactly the action it has, in sharp contrast to the hit-or-miss procedure responsible for developing most drugs.

"This is the first really effective drug that was designed as an enzyme inhibitor," claims David W. Cushman, a biochemist at Squibb Corporation's Institute for Medical Research, who, with organic chemist Miguel A. Ondetti, developed the drug. The Squibb researchers "have made a tremendous pharmacological contribution," says Dr. John H. Laragh, director of the Cardiovascular Center of New York Hospital-Cornell University Medical College.

What has captured the attention of Wall Street

effect that captopril, which Squibb plans to market under the trade name Capoten, could have on the company. Its stock has been buoyed by reports on the forthcoming drug since before it went into early clinical testing in early 1977. "This drug will turn Squibb around," predicts Cushman.

Some analysts predict that captopril alone could better than double the size of Squibb by 1985. Some clinicians testing the product are equally excited, and such Squibb competitors are Merck, Morton-Norwich, and USB Pharmaceuticals are scrambling to develop similar products. Scientists say captopril could significantly advance the treatment of hypertension, a disease that affects about forty million people in the United States and that is known as the "silent killer" because victims frequently show no symptoms until they are felled by heart attacks, strokes or kidney failure.

The drug would probably never have been developed

but for Dr. Laragh's research into the cause of high blood pressure. He was determined to prove that most cases of life-threatening high blood pressure are caused by a malfunctioning of the kidneys. Although the idea that a kidney hormone called renin plays an important role in regulating blood pressure was not new, researchers had tried many times without success in preceding years to verify the evidence.

But Dr. Laragh persisted. He and his co-workers eventually confirmed the importance of renin and went on to unravel the elaborate feedback system that controls blood pressure. "It works like the thermostat on the wall," Laragh explains. After being secreted by the kidney, renin travels in the blood to the lungs, where an enzyme converts it into a powerful substance that causes blood vessels to constrict, thus raising blood pressure. This converted substance also signals the adrenal gland to produce a hormone that tells the kidneys to

hold onto salt, which increases the volume of blood in the body. In healthy people, this raises blood pressure to normal levels, and the kidneys stop secreting renin. But in hypertension, the kidney keeps going.

The key step in Dr. Laragh's discovery was determining whether blocking part of the feedback process would reduce blood pressure. In 1973, he contacted Squibb where Ondetti was studying an extract from the venom of a South American snake that could stop lung enzyme from making the substance that constricts blood vessels. Dr. Laragh used Ondetti's extract to lower the blood pressure of a group of patients with critical hypertension.

That success gave Laragh the final proof that he had unraveled the cause of the deadly disease. And Laragh's work convinced Squibb that a drug that blocked the converting enzyme could be a highly effective treatment for hypertension. Captopril is the result.

Scientists are convinced that captopril marks the first of a group of drugs targeted at specific enzymes in the body. Enzymes are known to be involved in such inflammatory diseases as arthritis and scientists suspect there may also be a link in central nervous system disorders such as schizophrenia. "We have opened the way to take this approach with other diseases," says Squibb's Cushman.

### Letters to the Editor:

Mrs. A. Hamilton Daye recently wrote a letter you published in which she addressed the need for supporters and alumni of "black" colleges and universities to take a more active interest in the policy and administration of these institutions if they are to remain viable instruments of education for black youth.

One needs only to look at visible changes in the School of Law at NCCU [North Carolina Central University, Durham] to understand the importance of Mrs. Daye's letter.

NCCU has one of the four remaining law schools located at "black" universities in this country. This Law School has produced many outstanding lawyers who are a credit to this school and this nation. These alumni were able to become lawyers, in many cases, because NCCU Law School was here. Their race and/or limited personal funds prevented them from attending other law schools.

My concern, as a student presently enrolled in NCCU Law School, is that future generations of blacks aspiring to be lawyers may not be able to attend Central if present racial enrollment is indicative of a trend.

When one combines the student enrollment of the Day and Evening Programs, the majority of the present first-year class is non-black. Students have been told that many of the blacks who were admitted to this first year class were unable to attend because of the limited amount of financial aid that is available. These students were not eligible for the \$25,000.00 state "minority presence" grant simply because of their race. Only non-black students can apply for this money. Nor is there available to students of any race at NCCU the National Defense Student Loan, federal funded financial assistance which students can borrow at low interest. The reason given is that graduates of Central failed to repay their loans and, as a result, the school is no longer eligible to participate.

The trend among professors is similar. Presently there are eight black male professors, five non-black male and two non-black females. There are no black female law professors at Central. One black professor who will be leaving at the end of this term has been replaced by a non-black female.

This writer's fear is that, in the next few years, supporters and alumni of the Law School may find that the only black law school in this state has ceased to exist. The Law School will have become a predominately white professional school located on the campus of a "black" university. Black students will face the same problems at Central that they presently encounter when they try to enroll at some of the other law schools around the state.

Perhaps the trend is acceptable to those who believe that Central Law School has served its mission of the past and that there is no longer a need for black colleges and universities. But, this writer believes that it is crucial that Central and its Law School remain as viable educational institutions for Black People. It is just as crucial that alumni, supporters and communities take a more active interest in all phases of these institutions and that they begin to monitor the "input" as well as "output" of our educational institutions.

Margaret E. Miller

Your editorial, "Let's Abolish Black History Month" raises questions, and requires thought on the Blacks who know where they began life as a human Being. Where they are now...and where they would go as Citizen, an individual and a member of the Black community. We accept...and strengthen the fact that we are "American".

Our roots as Americans began at Jamestown settlement in 1619, and in spite of nigh only Two Hundred years of chattel slavery...and the rot and brutality of the times and the slave system, We...Blacks are still here. "Let's Abolish Black History Month". No way. Let's make every month a Black History Month.

Let's recall the anger of Nat Turner...the vision of Booker Washington...the radicalism of Malcolm X...and the gut-born sanity of Martin Luther King...and we would remember Black women, Harriett Tubman, Phyllis Wheatley...Mary McLeod Bethune and Lucinda Harris.

Blacks in...and of America stand in the valleys, but we must not, and can not forget that valleys are beautiful, and part of the mountain scene. Blacks must create their own beautiful lifestyles...their own sustaining economics, and regain their own Identity and Dignity.

"Let's Abolish Black History Month"...only if Blacks can forget the sufferings...the denials and chattel status of their parentage who, in spite of that status, produced the Art...the Music and the literature, that we limit one month of each year, to remember and celebrate "Black History Month"...USA.

"Let's Abolish Black History Month"...only if Blacks want to forget, and would forget, that their parentage began the cultures...on the continent of

Africa, cultures that gave birth to the World's civilization of the day. Blacks must remember that the Generals and Consuls of the Western and Latin areas destroyed the Artifacts and Libraries of African cultures...along with the merchant/learning/social centers.

No way should we abolish Black History Month...but revive the culture that we...as people and Americans, attempted to build, A Black people, Black heritage, and Black Americans.

Let's NOT abolish Black History Months...but let's make each in the year, a month to remember...to teach and to awaken, Blacks to their beginnings, their status now (as Citizens) and to plan, as a community, for the future...in America, USA.

Let's keep Black history alive...and re-ignite the fires of heritage...kindred and pride that sustains us...as a people, from 1619 through the days of RECONSTRUCTION. Let's begin the new chapters of Black History...by doing things...on our own...that can and will make Black History. Let's not Abolish Black History Month. Let's recall our Black history in our churches, our homes and our many clubs, while we create history...Black History; creating areas of employment...economic growth...self-sufficiency...and the dignity of Being.

William K. O'Neal

*Editor's Note: We believe we expressed essentially the same sentiments in our editorial to which the foregoing writer refers as he does in his letter objecting to the editorial. The point of the editorial was that black history should be so complete WITHIN mankind's history that there would be no need to set aside one month for it. It would then be studied by everybody who studies history every day of every month of every year, everywhere. The history of so great a people can not be done justice in one month.*

### Coping You Can Defeat Stress Part I

By Dr. Charles W. Faulkner

Sleepless nights, constant headaches, tension, irritability, temper tantrums, feelings of gloom and helplessness, periods of sweating, trembling, crying spells, difficulty in breathing, hypertension, loneliness, desire to be alone, and even thoughts of suicide — these are sure signs of the most common illness confronting people today, stress.

You can easily defeat stress and gain self-control by following this advice:

- Discuss your problems with a friend. Do not attempt to carry the emotional burden alone. A friend can help you bring your problems down to earth and unburden you of their immense emotional weight.
- Stop trying to compete with others. Do as much as you can with your abilities. But, do not allow the performance of other people to determine how you feel about your performance. Use your talents fully and be pleased with yourself.
- Get involved in other activities. Do not sit around and mull over the problems in your life during your spare time. Fill your spare time with constructive activity.
- Enjoy the challenges of your life. Do not fear a challenge. Look at your life as a series of developmental steps that prepare you for greater things. Take each step one at a time. Realize that each step prepares you for the next challenge. Each challenge prepares you for the next

larger challenge. Enjoy learning from the challenges.

• Benefit from your fantasies. Sit in a quiet room and imagine yourself comfortable and relaxed. Daydream about yourself being in perfect control of your emotions — regardless of the problem that caused the emotional response. Your imagination actually controls your feelings.

• Stop worrying about things that may never happen. Studies have shown that of the things we worry about, fewer than eighty per cent ever occur the way we imagine them. And, one-half of this number are things over which we have no control. So, why worry?

• Deal with a problem as soon as it presents itself. Do not allow problems to linger by criticizing yourself constantly for not confronting the issue when it first arose. It is better to do the wrong thing initially in dealing with a problem than to continually worry about what you should have done.

More advice will be given to show you how to gain your victory over stress in Part II next week.

Your questions are welcomed. Suggestions for future articles will be appreciated. Cassette tapes of this and other articles are available for individual use, discussion groups and classroom use. All letters and inquiries should be sent to: Dr. Charles W. Faulkner, P.O. Box 50016, Washington, DC 20004.

## Introducing the new Monte Carlo More than just a pretty car.

The 1981 Monte Carlo does a lot more than turn heads. It is a personal car as individual as you are. But keep in mind it's a car engineered to exist in a world of hard facts.

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Power steering, power brakes and automatic transmission...plus the new GM Computer Command Control System that continuously monitors engine performance are all standard equipment for 1981.

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In your new Monte Carlo everyone's in for a great ride. So remember, when you buy this 1981 Monte Carlo, you're buying a lot more than just a pretty car.

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