significant at the 5 per cent level ($F = 2.078$ — F 5 per cent requires 2.1). Subdivision of the sum of squares for treatments into a comparison of pooled treatments versus pooled placebo yields a mean square of 2,904.15. This mean square is highly significant when compared with the $Tr \times S$ interaction ($F = 8.614$ — F 1 per cent requires 7.24). The pooled drug effect is therefore significantly greater than the placebo effect. The remaining 8 degrees of freedom for treatments yields a mean square of 425.3. This value is of the order of magnitude of the error term and therefore in the present experiment we are unable to differentiate among the various treatments. This analysis indicates that the conclusions previously drawn with respect to the relative effectiveness of the various treatments is not justified.

In summary, it would appear that the method, as utilized, is capable of revealing the effect of a drug in comparison to placebo but that in the present instance insufficient data are at hand to allow comparisons among the drugs and doses utilized.

In the light of our conjecture (p. 812), it is of interest that Batterman (Batterman, R. C.: Placebo and Non-reactors to Analgesics, Fed. Proc. **16**: 280, 1957) reports that 76 per cent of patients may respond or not respond on a given trial to analgesic or placebo medication.

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CARBON DIOXIDE ABSORBERS

To the Editor.—I notice in your recent issue (Anesthesiology **18**: 339 (March–April) 1957) that Dr. H. H. Samson of Johannesburg, South Africa, has designed an apparatus to overcome the disadvantages of carbon dioxide absorbers "available until now."

He describes the device incorporating the circular wire mesh and spring to ensure compactness of the soda lime and prevention of channelling. With due respect to my colleague, I would like to point out that a similar device has been part of the Water's absorber as made by Heidbrink Division of Airco Corporation which I have been using here in Hong Kong since 1952. Absorption is very satisfactory although the canister itself is rather on the heavy side.

The plain Waters absorber has remained faithful all these years, and the same effect as Dr. Samson's modification can be obtained after the method of Robson and Pask (Brit. J. Anaesth. **26**: 333, 1954) by using an inexpensive nylon pot scraper against the soda lime.

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