

September 18, 1947

Dear Dr. Mahoney;

With respect to the Army plan to study prophylaxis under field conditions we are of the opinion that the test should be made. We have as yet no evidence of the value in syphilis, but as indicated in the other letter suggestions of its value have begun to appear. But the work on gonorrhea as indicated in the complete report just submitted indicates a very real protection obtained under the conditions prevailing. The low incidence of infection following natural exposure indicates that the test to which the method was submitted is much more drastic than that occurring under conditions of normal exposure. A study is already under way to determine the efficacy when the prophylactic is self administered at 1 hour after exposure. In discussing with the group the possibilities of securing a larger series we have decided upon two possibilities. The first would entail using pus to inoculate our experimental groups immediately after contact with clean prostitutes. The second would require our giving similar exposure to the men reporting for prophylaxis following liberty. In that way we could work with groups of ten or fifteen controls and an equal number of treated patients every evening. Of course we should not have established freedom from infection either in the exposure or prior to exposure, but the size of the control and treated groups would be great enough to minimize such errors.

We think that we have solved the problem of securing ample supplies of pus as needed, for we should be able to use our patients in the hospital under treatment for syphilis, infecting them artificially. But before we set up the plan we shall have to secure Dr. Tejada's approval. I think, though, that he will agree. Under such conditions within a few weeks we could have a group of several hundred patients, control and treated.

The physician with whom we work at the Guardia de Honor has suggested that we give the method a field trial in his unit. There are 1000 men living in a fort with only one entrance; about 150 per day have liberty between 2 and 8 PM, and all are now required to take the standard army prophylaxis when they return. We do not have figures for the expected rate of infection, but I have seen there as many as ten cases per week.

We feel that the field trial that you propose for Italy is highly desirable and necessary and should be carried on under the supervision of the laboratory. I think that Dr. Arnold is the one who should undertake the supervision, first because of the tremendous amount of work that he has done on the preparation and second because I do not think that it would be wise for me to be here until we have completely finished.

Sincerely,