

TWO NEW MUSCLE RELAXING COMPOUNDS REVEALED

Two new muscle relaxing compounds, said to be five times as potent in animal tests as mephenesin, a presently used relaxant, have been developed in the United States. The new chemicals, based on the compound pyrimidine, block muscle activity by 80 to 100 per cent, according to Dr. Donald E. Heitmeier, a senior organic chemist at Irwin, Neisler and Company in Decatur, Illinois. Besides their muscle relaxing ability, they are sedatives comparable to the barbiturate drugs and also have hypnotic properties, he said. They have not yet been clinically tested.

Muscle relaxants are used to depress body reflexes during surgery and to treat spasms associated with certain forms of paralysis. The new drugs, resulting from chemical changes in phenylramidol, which is both an analgesic and a muscle relaxant, showed "marked enhancement of centrally induced muscle relaxant properties, a sharp reduction in analgesic activity and the appearance of strong, sedative-hypnotic properties," Dr. Heitmeier told a recent meeting of the American Chemical Society.

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is, by the accident of his trade as a collector and disseminator, the prototype of what should exist in academic and public life, the communicator of information on which judgements can be made. In his own working life, his function is to convey to the mass of people the facts about science, but also to convey an interpretation of the social implica-

tions of new developments.

I know that many of my colleagues think that they should confine themselves to description and explanations and leave the value judgements to others. I disagree profoundly. Our access to information, our point of vantage on the scientific scene, give us responsibilities which, in the present situation, we must not shirk. — (UNESCO)