

MEDICAL NEWS in brief
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You can shoot pictures and show your friends some marvelous shots you got, but you will not be called either a shooter or a shot. On the other hand, you cannot shoot trouble, nor be a troubleshooter; if you are a trouble-shooter, you troubleshoot.

And then, of course, there is the kind of shot we get popularly as a protection against colds. There are hundreds of varieties of it, but, to get any of them, we do not get shot and nobody shoots us; the person who gives them is neither a shot nor a shooter but a physician or a registered nurse and the instrument used in the process is never called a gun. I wonder why not. The tool we call a grease gun is a kind of syringe too, isn't it? But then, we do not use our grease guns to shoot shots of grease. Their syringe-like appearance does not seem to have struck the imagination of our language, while the metaphoric shot in the arm has gone all over the place. Under certain conditions a shot of whisky can prove a real shot in the arm.—Alexander Gode: *Just Words*, (J. A. M. A., 185: 444, 1963).

**CARDIOVERSION OF
ATRIAL FIBRILLATION**

A new electronic method for terminating ectopic arrhythmias has been introduced by Lown *et al.* (*New Eng. J. Med.*, 269: 325, 1963). The principle consists of depolarization of the heart across the intact chest during a safe part of the cardiac cycle with a brief monophasic direct-current pulse. This procedure has been designated as cardioversion, and the instrument used has been referred to as a Cardioverter.

This method was employed to treat 65 episodes of atrial fibrillation in 50 patients. All but three had rheumatic valvular disease. The mean duration of atrial fibrillation was 26 months. The longest duration of arrhythmia was 17 years.

Cardioversion was successful in restoring sinus rhythm in 45 of the 50 patients, 90%. There were no immediate complications.

In the majority of patients with atrial fibrillation, cardioversion is to be preferred to the use of quinidine for restoring sinus rhythm be-

cause it is simpler, safer and more effective.

**45th ANNUAL SESSION,
AMERICAN COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS**

The 45th Annual Session of the American College of Physicians will be held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, April 6-10, 1964.

The Committee on Program invites original contributions for the scientific program and will welcome communications dealing with

the basic sciences related to internal medicine, reports of clinical investigations, and new and original observations in clinical medicine. Interested investigators and teachers need not be members of the College to participate.

Information concerning the submission of contributions to the program has been supplied to Deans of Medical Schools and to Heads of Departments of Medicine, or may be obtained from the Executive Director, American College of Physicians, 4200 Pine St., Philadelphia 4, Pa., U.S.A.

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