Desensitization Against the Effects of Bee-Stings

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Successful desensitization by the method of intradermal injections of whole-bee extract is claimed in 50 out of 59 persons reported highly sensitive to bee stings. The value of the intradermal method is stressed and consideration is given to the desirability of using whole-bee extracts which contain the allergenic element in contrast to using sting-sac extracts which have a relatively high concentration of venom.

The preparation of the whole-bee extract is given and its use both for preliminary skin testing and the full desensitization is discussed. Analysis of the 9 cases in which desensitization was not satisfactory showed that in 4 cases maintenance injections were not continued and in 5 cases desensitization was successful against the first but not against later stings. Bee stings occurring in successfully desensitized persons appear to reduce the immunity that has been acquired and thus render it necessary to retest the patient and, if indicated, to recommence desensitization.

There may be a major hazard therefore in the practice of periodic testing using the actual sting of a live bee to follow the progress of desensitization.

A detailed report will be published in Int. Arch. Allergy.