Technique

A genteel device for collecting faeces

E. S. PRYKE AND H. M. WHYTE *From the Department of Clinical Science, The John Curtin School of Medical Research, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia*

The collection of faeces is necessary for a variety of microbiological and biochemical tests. We describe here a simple device which was developed for use in prolonged studies of cholesterol turnover. It has proved to be efficient and acceptable to the subjects and to the nursing and laboratory staff, and has been used by people at home as well as in hospital.

Design

The device is a metal adaptor for an ordinary water closet carrying a polythene bag as a receptacle for the faeces (Figs. 1 and 2).

The metal adaptor was made of 20 G stainless steel sheeting and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch stainless steel rod, spot welded, with all joints filled with stainless steel solder to eliminate sharp edges. The three flanges were spaced and shaped to fit the porcelain rim of the average toilet in T or Y fashion and to support the centre ring which was strategically aligned to the average adult 'bottom'. The central ring was 6 in. in diameter, $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. in height and had steel rod at its edges. Its centre point was about $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. from the front of the toilet bowl and its upper surface rested 2 in. below the upper surface of the toilet seat.

Collection bags were made from 10 in. flat-width PVC tubing, 0.002-0.0025 in. thickness, using a Doughboy rotary sealing machine to give a bag length of 11 to 12 inches.

Method of Use

A plastic bag is brought up through the ring and its edge folded back over the metal ring and held in place by an elastic band. The bag is opened out by hand, the whole device placed in position on the toilet and the lid brought down on to it. The length of the bag should be such that it does not reach the water in the bowl. Male patients have had no difficulty in voiding urine into the WC forward of the bag. Female patients should be instructed to void urine before putting the collector into place. Toilet paper can be discarded into the WC alongside the bag.

Received for publication 10 July 1970.

Fig. 1 The device in place over the lavatory pan, with the lid raised. (Photographs by S. Butterworth.)

Fig. 2 The attachment of the bag to the metal support.

The loaded bag is easily removed from the apparatus without contamination, sealed with the elastic band, labelled, and placed in a tin in a deep-freezer. Subsequently it can be removed, unsealed, and the frozen faeces shelled, like a pea from its pod, into the laboratory vessel for analysis. This is an almost odourless procedure under a fume hood and practically no faeces are lost. For our particular purpose the addition of hot water speeded thawing preparatory to homogenization.

We are grateful to the staff of the workshop of the John Curtin School, and to Mr R. Hurley of the Canberra Hospital for assistance with the bags.