

APPENDIX I

Physical Therapy Department, 108th General Hospital¹

Our whirlpools are used for many open wounds, especially hand injuries. Because of the large number of patients (an average of 50 a day having whirlpool, and only 2 whirlpools) it is impossible to change the water after each patient. Often it is necessary to give two or three patients whirlpool at the same time. I asked the laboratory to make culture of the water at various periods during the day and found that the bacteria count was high. Therefore to guard against cross-infection we experimented with various solutions trying to find one that would keep the water sterile but would not irritate skin or tissue. Lysol did not work, as a solution strong enough to kill bacteria was irritating to the skin. A creosol solution nauseated the patients. Finally, we tried sodium hypochlorite, which works perfectly. Cultures were again made and were completely negative. Perhaps this isn't really necessary, as I've never seen a case of infection from whirlpool, but I felt it was better not to take chances.

¹ Extract from report included in letter, Department of Physical Therapy, 108th General Hospital, to Lt. Jean Beatty, Office of the Chief Surgeon, Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army, 21 June 1945, subject: Report of Physical Therapy Activities.