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AN OBSERVED INFESTATION AND TREATMENT OF  
PSOROPTES CUNICULI IN THE EARS OF  
LABORATORY RABBITS

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From time to time laboratory rabbits have been observed to carry a parasitic infestation which produces a scabbing of the skin of the inner, proximal surface of the ear (Schwartz, 1928).<sup>1</sup>

An infested rabbit, which was being immunized against *Salmonella pullorum*, called particular attention to its condition because of the symptoms produced. The animal exhibited convulsions and loss of equilibrium. It held its head on one side, with the more heavily infested ear down.

Further investigation led to the recovery of a mite, which was tentatively identified as *Psoroptes cuniculi*. The parasite was present in large numbers in the heavily scabbed material in the outer ear, and to a lesser degree from the inner ear and semi-circular canals. The brain, which was recovered from this animal, is being prepared for further study although no microscopic lesions were noticed.

Treatment of the infestation before the inner ear is involved is very simple, consisting of swabbing the affected area with equal parts of 5% phenol and glycerol. The glycerol tends to soften the scabs so that they can be easily removed, and the phenol penetrates far enough to kill any mites left on the skin. In the majority of cases, two or three applications over a period of as many days have been efficacious in removing the mites.

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<sup>1</sup>Schwartz, 1928, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farmer's Bulletin No. 1568.