

HEMATOLOGICAL DISTURBANCES INDUCED BY *BOTHRUPS* VENOM

Ida S. Sano-Martins, Seção de Hematologia, Instituto Butantan. São Paulo.

Local and systemic disturbances are usually observed in patients bitten by *Bothrops* snakes. The most common systemic disturbance is blood incoagulability⁹ occurring more frequently in patients who were bitten by young snakes.⁶ This incoagulability is attributed mainly to fibrinogen consumption induced by thrombin-like fractions.⁸ In addition to these fractions some *Bothrops* venoms may activate factor X and II³ causing formation of intravascular thrombin.¹ This is confirmed by the presence of cross-linked fibrin fragment D in blood from patients.² Besides, the intravascular coagulation causes an activation of the fibrinolytic system. Moreover, a mild thrombocytopenia is observed which may be induced either by the activated coagulation system or by components from *Bothrops* venom acting on platelets such as botrocetin, which has agglutinant activity⁵ and thrombocytin which has aggregating activity⁴. The role of all these fractions in envenomations is still uncertain, although the *in vitro* activities are well studied.

In addition to the action on hemostasis most of these venoms possess an *in vitro* hemolytic activity⁷. However, there are no descriptions of serious intravascular hemolysis in patients. The action of these venoms on other blood cells seems to be unspecific. In conclusion, the most specific and apparent hematological disturbance in *Bothrops* envenomations is the blood incoagulability and thrombocytopenia.

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