

*J. Letters*

April 11, 1978

Mr. G. S. Avery, Editor-in-Chief  
ADIS  
Auckland, New Zealand

Dear Mr. Avery,

The report on Mianserin written by Brogden, Heel, Speight and Avery is well done, and I find little to modify. There are some errors in citations which I can bring to your attention, but the sense of the text is consistent with my experience with mianserin.

One emphasis that could be modified has to do with the significance of the EEG screen and how this led to the study of mianserin as a thymoleptic. EEG analysis as a basis for the classification of psychoactive drugs has a long history with some definitive studies in 1961 and 1963 published by myself and Itil. In the mid-1960's, we saw the possible usefulness of the classification in predicting the activity of new drugs and the first studies were done with such drugs as fenfluramine, cyclazocine and doxepin. In each instance, the EEG screen was a better predictor of the clinical activity of the compound than the animal pharmacology. This was particularly true for doxepin, whose pharmacology was seen as anxiolytic in the early studies. Our study found it antidepressant, and since then, this view has been confirmed. Based on these data, I recommended to Organon that new drugs be screened and in 1970 they sent a number of compounds to Itil and myself, then working in separate laboratories. He found mianserin to be active and its profile as a thymoleptic led to the subsequent development. Even after the EEG screen and clinical trials, the pharmacology failed to meet the accepted thymoleptic standards. The importance of the EEG screen could be emphasized, because, as Dr. Itil noted in his 1972 paper, he 'discovered' its thymoleptic activity.

As to the citation errors-- I note that Fell et al are dated 1972 on page 6 and 1973 on page 7. 1973 is correct. The citation is lacking in the citation list. Also, there is a citation to Fink et al (1977) on page 6, which is lacking on the citation list. I enclose a copy of the 1977 report for your reviewer to cite if he wishes.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this article which presents the data in a fashion similar to my view of it.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.  
Professor of Psychiatry