animals may have a specific teratogenic susceptibility and may yield "false positive" results. Therefore the interpretation of positive laboratory data can only be attempted by taking all the known aspects of the biological activity of a compound into consideration.

From the experimental data gained in recent years it is concluded that suspected noxious actions of drugs on the embryo were detected by proper experimentation.

The characteristics of a compound must be taken into account when discussing priorities of testing, e.g. chemical structure and intended use.

In general, animal tests for teratogenicity should be performed in support of clinical trials of a new drug.

Tests should also be extended to known drugs in widespread use. Compounds of that sort offer the advantage of the large experience gained in a large human population for a comparatively long period of time. Therefore it is of considerable scientific interest to evaluate such compounds in teratogenicity studies on animals. Such information may form the basis for future attempts to estimate the predictive value with regard to humans of animal experiments in this field.

The prospects of identifying teratogenic agents seem favourable and as more experience is gained by animal experiments and human epidemiological studies, preventive measures may become a possibility.

Since, among many predisposing factors, the genetic component may be an important determinant in experimental teratogenicity experiments using particularly susceptible species or strains of laboratory animals, it may be useful to elucidate the importance of different genetic mechanisms in the development of congenital malformations.

The development of these different lines of investigation may lead in the future to a better insight into teratological mechanisms and consequently to valuable improvements in teratogenic drug testing.

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