

lungs severely damaged by trauma and viral or chemical pneumonia might recover, membrane oxygenators have been employed with reasonable success in recent years. Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) is still in its infancy and has among its major problems the accumulation of water in the gas phase and 'plasma weeping' from the membrane which inhibit gas transfer rate over long periods. There is little doubt however that ECMO will sooner or later pave the way for semi-permanent or permanent lung substitutes which would offer a new life to patients with severe lung disease and pulmonary insufficiency. This would call for continued improvements in the microporous membrane and the possible incorporation of the nonrespiratory functions of the normal lung in the membrane system by techniques such as the grafting of appropriate cells and molecular groups.

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## NEWS

### NEW THERAPY FOR ULCERS

... "A synthetic prostaglandin that stands up to histamine H<sub>2</sub> receptor antagonists in ulcer treatment and also protects gastric mucosa has been approved for use in Mexico. The prostaglandin E<sub>1</sub> derivative, misoprostol (Cytotec, Searle), is as effective as cimetidine (Tagamet, Smith Kline & French) and has few side effects, according to Stephen J. Sontag [Veterans Admin. Hosp., Hines, Ill]. 'Also, it protects mucosal tissue from irritants and may prevent blood loss caused by ulcers or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory agents,' Sontag said. ... 'Furthermore, the cytoprotective effect may not be limited to the stomach and duodenum. The prostaglandin derivative may prove

useful for treating pancreatitis, asthma, or liver cirrhosis,' he added. So far, Mexico is the only country to approve Cytotec for treatment of gastric and duodenal ulcers, but Searle has requested approval in at least 30 countries."

[(In *Medical World News* 8 Apr 85, p. 63-4 (See also: E. Garfield. All about ulcers, antacids, and how little we know. *Essays of an information scientist*. Philadelphia: ISI Press, 1981. Vol. 4, p. 666-73.) [pd 2604j]\*). Reproduced with permission from Press Digest, *Current Contents*®, No. 26, July 1, 1985, p. 9. (Published by the Institute for Scientific Information®, Philadelphia, PA, USA)]