

Dec. 4, 1951

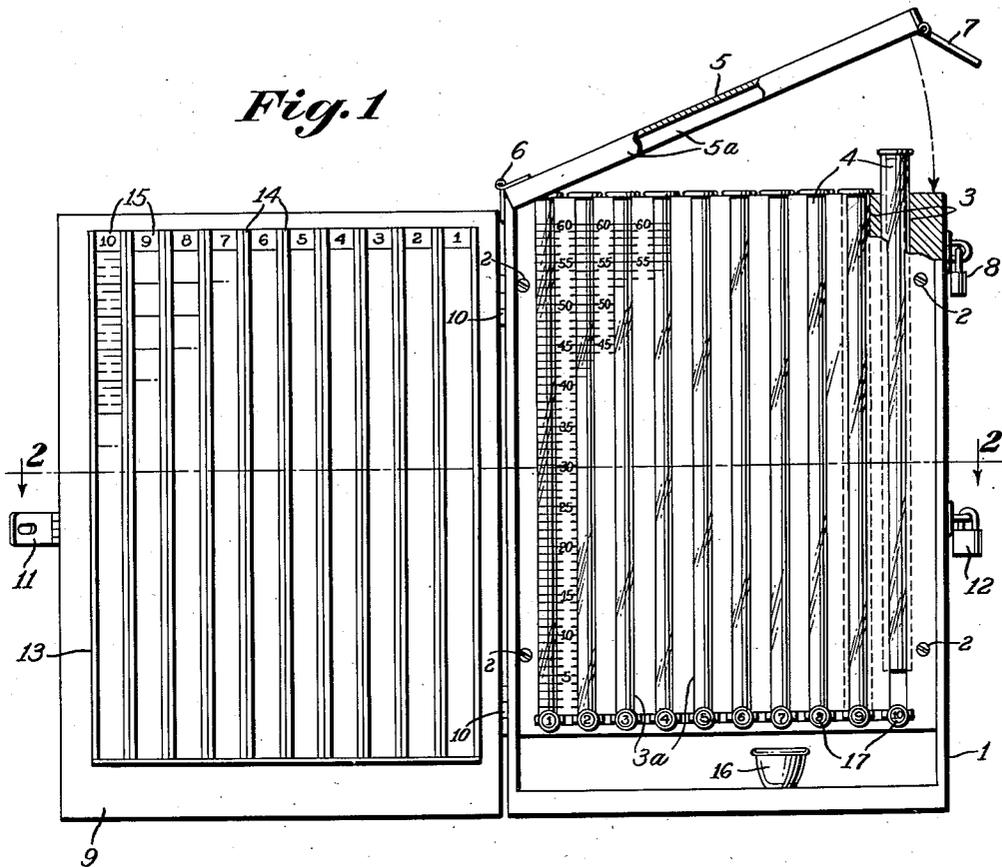
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NARCOTIC DISPENSER

2,577,344

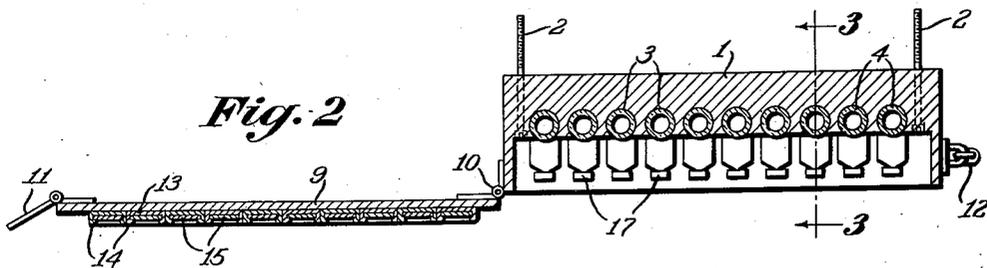
Filed Jan. 10, 1950

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1

*Fig. 1*



*Fig. 2*



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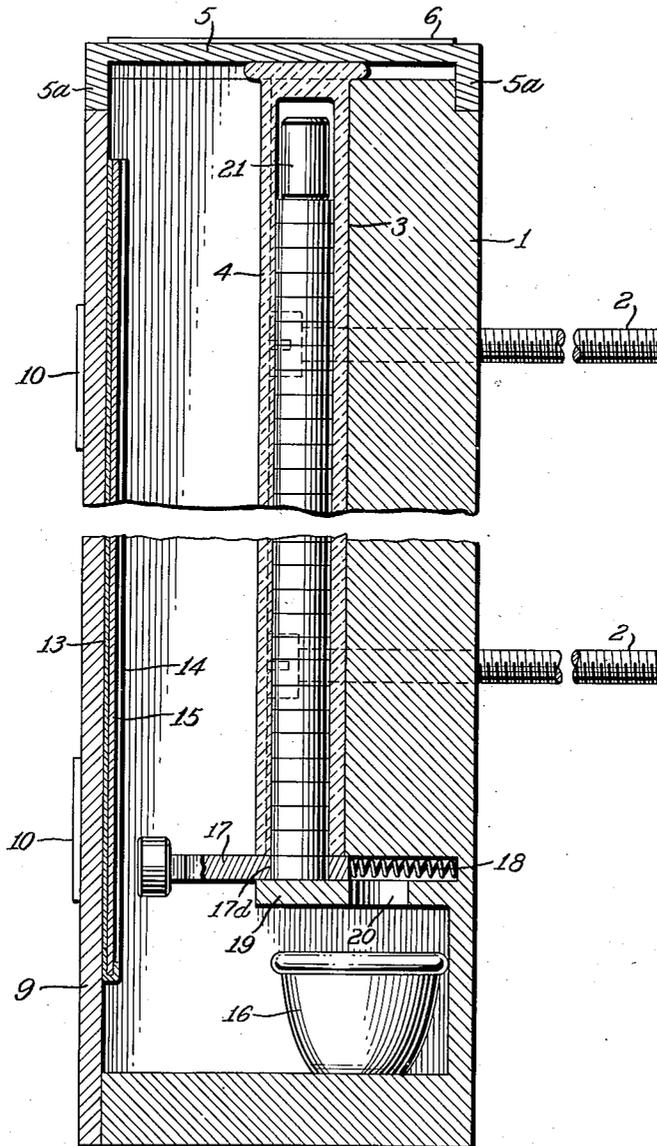
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2 SHEETS—SHEET 2

*Fig. 3*



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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,577,344

## NARCOTIC DISPENSER

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Application January 10, 1950, Serial No. 137,874

5 Claims. (Cl. 312-47)

1

2

This invention relates to dispensing apparatus and more particularly to apparatus for dispensing narcotic tablets singly, and which is so constructed as to safeguard against removal of vials containing large quantities of tablets by unauthorized persons.

An outstanding objection to common types of narcotic dispensers is that they permit dispensing or removal of relatively large quantities of narcotic tablets at a time. Thus there is a constant danger that supplies of narcotic tablets will be stolen by narcotic fiends or other unauthorized persons which, of course, is dangerous for those taking over-dosages of these tablets. Also, it may deplete the supply of a particular narcotic tablet at a time when it may be sorely needed.

An object of the present invention is to provide a novel narcotic dispenser which permits dispensing of a variety of narcotic tablets in a sanitary manner and in which the various tablets may be quickly and visually identified and distinguished as well as counted.

A further object of the invention is to provide a narcotic dispensing cabinet in which the case is so constructed that parts thereof may be selectively locked to insure safekeeping of the drugs and restricted use by patients.

A still further object of the invention is to provide a narcotic dispensing apparatus capable of storing large quantities of narcotics of different types and which is so constructed that it may be quickly refilled with a new supply of any desired type of tablets.

Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from a study of the following specification taken with the accompanying drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a front view of a narcotics dispensing case or cabinet involving the principles of the present invention and shown in the open position;

Figure 2 is a transverse cross-sectional view taken along the line 2-2 of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is an enlarged longitudinal cross-sectional view taken along the line 3-3 of Figure 2.

Referring more particularly to Figures 1 and 2, the numeral 1 denotes a case or cabinet for storing narcotic tablets, and which may be securely fastened to a wall or other support by means of bolts 2, which bolts are inaccessible so as to prevent unauthorized removal of the entire case. The case 1 may be made of any suitable material such as stainless steel, or perhaps of plastic wood, or the like, and is provided with a plurality of cylindrical holes 3 which are disposed in vertical spaced relationship and which provide vertically extending slots 3a at the front of the case. Vials 4 for the narcotic tablets occupy the holes 3, the tablets which they contain being visible through the transparent walls of

the vials and through the slots 3a, so that the supply of the various tablets within the respective vials may be visually determined. Alongside these slots on the front face of the interior of the case there are disposed graduations corresponding to the thickness of the tablets so that the number of tablets remaining in any vial can be counted by matching the top tablet with the number alongside thereof. The width of the inside of the tube may be of the order of 5 millimeters to accommodate the conventional narcotic tablet. However, this dimension may be increased or decreased to accommodate any size tablet desired.

The conventional length of standard narcotic tube or vial is about 71 millimeters and usually contains about twenty tablets. While it is possible to store such vials directly into the cylindrical holes 3 by removing the stopper and inserting the dispensing end through the top of the cylindrical holes, such vials would be unsatisfactory for busy surgical wards wherein a much larger supply of any narcotic is more desirable. For this reason, it is preferred to provide separate glass tubes or vials 4 of greater length than the standard narcotic stock tube. The vials 4 are shown closed at the top and open at the bottom. In other words, the vials occupy the holes 3 in inverted position. The various vials are of equal length and of such diameter as to maintain the tablets stacked but freely slidably therein. In the illustrative embodiment of the invention ten vials 4 are shown in side by side relation, although of course the cabinet may be made in sizes to hold any desired number of vials.

At the top of the case or cabinet 1 there is provided a lid or cover 5 which is pivotally mounted by a hinge 6 to one side of the case. Lips or side flanges 5a are provided so as to extend slightly downwardly alongside the front and rear of the case, as shown more clearly in Figure 3. When the lid is in the closed position, its hasp 7 may be locked by a padlock 8, so that the lid 5 is locked over the top ends of the respective vials 4, as shown in Figure 3. Only the nurse or person in charge of replenishing the supply of narcotic tablets may have the key to this padlock so as to make it impossible for unauthorized persons to pull out an entire vial or several vials filled with narcotic tablets.

A door 9 is pivotally mounted by hinges 10 to the front of the case and is provided with a hasp 11 which may be locked by means of padlock 12 requiring either a different key or the same key as padlock 8, as desired. It will be noted that since the bottom edge of the flanges 5a of lid 5 are positioned closely adjacent the top edge of the door 9 when both are in a closed position, this will enable opening of either the door or lid, one independently of the other. This is de-

sirable since during the day while lid 5 may be locked so as to prevent removal of filled vials of narcotic tablets, yet the door 9 may be left open to enable nurses to dispense single tablets by dispensing means which will be described hereinafter. The nurse in charge may keep the key for lock 12 and leave the cabinet open only at certain times of the day or night.

On the inside panel of door 9, there is supported a record card support 13 whose lowermost edge is upturned, as shown more clearly in Figure 3, and which support is provided with a plurality of spaced, vertically extending guides 14 for receiving cards 15 therebetween. These cards serve as record cards to indicate any given narcotic vial, for example one in confronting relationship. The narcotic may be identified by a label or number at the top of the card. The patient's name and the number of tablets taken by him for any given period of time, say every twenty-four hours, may be recorded. Thus, a convenient record may be provided to keep an up-to-the-minute count of the number of narcotic tablets taken by any individual patient.

On the bottom shelf of the case 1 there is supported a cup or container 16 for receiving dispensed narcotic tablets. Any suitable dispensing means may be provided for dispensing these tablets singly. A suitable type of dispensing means is more clearly shown in Figure 3 and comprises a horizontally disposed plunger 17 biased forwardly by a return spring 18. An opening 17d is provided in an intermediate portion of the plunger so as to register with the open lower end of the vial 4. Thus when plunger 17 is depressed against the action of spring 18, the tablet resting within the intermediate opening 17d is pushed along the top surface of the bottom plate 19 until it comes into registry with the outlet opening 20, from which it drops into the container 16. Of course, upon each reciprocation a single tablet, which is lowermost in the stack, is dispensed. A small weight 21 may be located in each vial 4 on top of the column of tablets therein, to increase the gravitational pressure on the column and assure positive delivery of a tablet into the opening 17d of the plunger.

In replenishing the vials 4, a vial is removed from the case and held substantially horizontal with the small weight 21 at the open end. Then the open mouth of the stock tube in which the narcotic tablets are purchased is placed against the mouth of the vial 4 and the two tipped up to upright position so that the tablets are transferred in the form of a stack from the stock tube to the vial. It may take several standard tubes to fill one vial. When the vial is full, any convenient narrow object such as the edge of a knife or spatula, is held diametrically across the open end, the vial inverted, and replaced in its proper hole 3, the spatula extending through the slot 3a and being held to keep the stack of tablets in place within the vial until the bottom of the slot 3a is reached, at which point the spatula is withdrawn. The stack of tablets drops, putting the lowermost tablet within the opening 17d of the plunger 17, in readiness to be dispensed upon reciprocation of the plunger.

Thus it will be seen that I have provided an efficient, fool-proof and tamper-proof narcotic dispenser for enabling the dispensing of narcotic tablets, singly, in succession, and for preventing the removal of larger quantities, such as complete vials of such tablets by narcotic fiends or other unauthorized persons, and which dispenser

is of such construction as to permit storage of a large supply of various types of tablets in a manner so that the supply can be visually determined and depleted supplies quickly replenished for any given narcotic; also, wherein a semi-locked condition may be provided on the cabinet whereby the narcotic containing vials cannot be bodily removed, whereas the tablets therein may be dispensed individually; also, which provides for sanitary handling of narcotics.

While I have illustrated and described a certain specific embodiment of my invention, it will be understood that this is by way of illustration only, and that various changes and modifications may be made within the contemplation of my invention and within the scope of the following claims.

What I claim as my invention is:

1. Dispensing safe for narcotic tablets comprising a cabinet containing storage and dispensing means for said tablets, said storage means including a vial support in the form of a panel having a planiform front face and having a plurality of vertical, spaced, parallel, side by side, cylindrical holes therethrough opening in the front face of said panel forming vertical parallel slots in said front face narrower than the diameter of said holes, the upper and lower ends of said holes terminating in parallel planes, individual dispensing plungers for said holes slidable across and against their lower ends, vials of uniform length closed at their upper and open at their lower ends fitting within said holes, supported by said panel with their lower ends at the plane of the lower ends of said holes, a top closure for said cabinet fitting substantially against the upper ends of said vials when closed, to hold them in place, and a lock for said closure.

2. Dispensing safe as claimed in claim 1, said vials each having a peripheral bead at the closed end resting on said panel.

3. Dispensing safe as claimed in claim 1, including a scale for each vial at the front face of said panel in juxtaposition to the corresponding slot, having divisions spaced apart the thickness of a tablet, and a series of ordinals in upwardly ascending order, at equal intervals along said scale to which the columns of tablets in the respective tubes are referred whereby the number of tablets remaining in any vial can be definitely ascertained.

4. Dispensing safe as claimed in claim 1, including a door enclosing the front face of said panel and a lock for said door.

5. Dispensing safe as claimed in claim 1, said cabinet including a common chamber beneath said dispensing plungers, adapted to house a receiving receptacle.

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