



ANCIENT BAR

*In a Roman city 2,000 years ago drinks were served over this bar. Today it is still suitable for service and its marble floor is still beautiful.*

baths, barracks for firemen, and an open air theater. Modern visitors observe with interest the large bar found near the theater.

Ostia's cemetery assumed peculiar life-likeness because of the carved tombstones on which bakers, merchants, and a variety of other trade folk had themselves portrayed at their daily tasks.

And with all that has been learned by digging, the Italians say that still

only one-fifth of the place has been unearthed.

The plan is to bring the whole of Ostia out into daylight, reconstructing what remains of crumbled buildings. The ruins are considered in very good preservation, especially the lower stories.

And with the intensive digging goes a hope that Ostia has more surprises in store. Some of its buildings mentioned in history are yet to be unearthed.

*Science News Letter, October 29, 1938*

#### MEDICINE

## Local Vaccination Brings Relief From Sinus Disease

### Snake Venom Is Recommended For Relieving Pain of Eye Diseases; Adam's Apple is Split Successfully

**F**OR THE relief of sinus disease sufferers throughout the country, medical science now offers vaccination of the lining of the sick sinus itself.

This treatment, so new it is said to be "dazzling" ear, nose and throat special-

ists who attended the meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology, was described by Dr. Frank J. Novak, Jr., of Chicago.

Glandular disturbance is often the cause of so-called winter hayfever or the

constant, non-infectious colds that make many persons, especially children, miserable with running noses and sneezing. These sufferers can be rid of their trouble within 24 hours when given doses of thyroid gland extract and calcium lactate, Dr. Novak said, although the treatment must be continued for a long time. This treatment is used for cases which are not due to allergy or super-sensitiveness to special foods, dust, pollens or the like.

Conservatism in operating for relief of sinus disease was stressed both by Dr. Novak and by Dr. Frederick T. Hill of Waterville, Me.

"Use one's conscience and do not operate upon sight," was the advice Dr. Hill, himself a surgeon, gave his colleagues.

Thorough study of the patient, and his history, and careful examination of his sinuses, including X-ray pictures, must be made before deciding to operate, Dr. Hill emphasized. Even then, the surgeon should do no more operating than is necessary.

The vaccination for sinus disease which Dr. Novak described is the result of the new trend toward studying the underlying factors in sinus disease.

Older measures of treatment, on the mechanical side, must not be neglected, Dr. Novak said. By this he meant that it is important to see that the openings of the nose and sinuses are large enough to provide adequate ventilation and to allow excess fluid in the sinuses to drain out normally.

The large wandering cells of the body which act as scavengers to destroy invading germs have recently been discovered in large numbers in the mucous membranes that line the sinuses. This discovery led to a search for a way to mobilize these scavenger cells in the infected linings. Local vaccination, the method chosen, is done by instilling into the larger sinus cavities carefully selected and graded doses of foreign protein or of material produced by germs ordinarily causing sinus trouble.

## Venoms Relieve Pain

**D**EADLY rattlesnake and cobra venom can be a great help in relieving pain in diseases of the eye, Prof. M. E. Alvaro of Sao Paulo, Brazil, told members of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology. Snake venom can also stop dangerous bleeding during eye operations, and it has been recommended for trachoma and for cancer of the eye.

To relieve pain, the venom is either dropped into the eye or injected into the membrane that lines the eyelids and covers the eyeball.

This pain-relieving use of snake venom and the hemorrhage-checking use during operations give the best results of all the many uses to which snake venoms have been put in eye diseases, it appears from Prof. Alvaro's exhaustive report of his own and other investigators' research.

The pain-relieving principle of rattle-snake venom has been isolated from the venom, by other scientists, in the form of pure crystals, and this crystalline material, Dr. Alvaro reported, is twice as active in relieving pain as the pure venom.

"Trachozid," derived by a Viennese doctor through a secret process from the venom of vipers and also of bees, is useful in treating trachoma, an infectious eye disease that often results in blindness. Trachozid, however, cannot yet be considered a specific remedy for trachoma, Dr. Alvaro pointed out.

The use of snake venom for cancer of the eye may be dangerous, he said, because while the venom can destroy cancer tissue, it can also cause spread of cancer from bits of cancerous tissue chewed off the cancer but not destroyed.

The isolation, by different scientists, of the pain-relieving principle of snake venoms and of the blood-coagulating principle, is important, Dr. Alvaro declared, because only by having these and other active materials in pure form can snake venom treatment be made really effective.

### Short Circuiting Operation

A SHORT-CIRCUITING operation to relieve chronic watery eyes was reported by Dr. William H. Stokes of Omaha, Nebr.

When infection or inflammation permanently blocks the tube through which the tears naturally leave the eye after bathing it, Dr. Stokes cuts a new opening from the tear sac into the nose.

The operation is not new, but Dr. Stokes has improved it by placing the short-circuit higher than has been customary before. In this way he uses more of the normal lower end of the tear sac and upper end of the duct. The result is closer to nature's own tear drainage arrangement.

### Split "Adam's Apple"

IMPROVEMENTS in the operation for removal of cancer of the larynx, or voice box, were described by Dr. M. C. Myerson of New York.

If the cancer is limited to one vocal cord, it is now possible to operate so that after the wound has healed the patient has a fairly good though somewhat weak voice and is able to breathe naturally without the necessity of an opening in the windpipe lower down in the neck.

In the operation, the "Adam's Apple" is split and the cancer cut out. After the cancerous vocal cord has been removed, neighboring tissues are examined immediately in frozen microscopic sections to make sure no cancer cells have been left behind, and the split larynx is sewed up tightly again.

### Get Advice on Hearing Aids

DEAFENED persons should seek the advice of doctors specializing in ear diseases when they choose hearing aids, Drs. Horace Newhart and Henry E. Hartig of Minneapolis said.

They warned against "racketeering instrument salesmen" who "exact high

prices for instruments which rapidly wear out, batteries which run down quickly, and provide no means for servicing the instrument in order to keep up its efficiency."

The final test of a hearing aid is intelligible, clear speech. Magnifying all sounds for people who are only deficient in certain parts of the scale creates unbearable noise, the two doctors pointed out. Ear specialists can check on this point and also can advise the kind of hearing aid needed by those deafened persons who require sound conduction through the bone back of the ear drum in order to hear.

One guard against the "racketeering instrument salesmen" is seen in the standards for hearing aids set by the American Medical Association, standards to which all reputable manufacturers now adhere.

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#### MEDICINE

### Emergency Bank Can Give Blood at Cost of a Dollar

BLOOD to save a life can be furnished in 45 minutes at a cost of one dollar by the blood bank of Cook County Hospital, Chicago, members of the American College of Surgeons were told at the Hospital Standardization Conference.

Blood for 4,400 transfusions, 7.6 per cent. of them definitely life-saving, has been drawn from the bank since its establishment in March, 1937, Dr. Karl A. Meyer, medical superintendent of the hospital, and Drs. Leonard H. Weissman and J. Lester Wilkey of the hospital staff, reported. In less than one out of every 100 cases was any harm done by transfusions with this blood.

Blood from living donors only is deposited in this bank. Cadaver blood, used in blood banks elsewhere, is not favored by the staff because a suitable and sufficient source of supply would not be available.

All the blood in the Cook County

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