VIRUS DETECTION

Dr. Irving Langmuir, of the General Electric Research Laboratory, demonstrates his new method of revealing the presence of invisible viruses through changes in the colors of very thin films.

MEDICINE

Anti-Measles Vaccine Will Get Trials in This Epidemic

Many Children Are Already Being Vaccinated; Army Considering Use Among Selective Service Trainees

MANY children in New Jersey and Philadelphia are now being vaccinated with a new and promising anti-measles vaccine, and Army medical authorities are about to consider the advisability of its use among selective service men now in training camps, where measles cases are on the increase.

The vaccine is not yet ready for general distribution and use. Dr. Geoffrey Rake, of the Squibb Institute for Medical Research at New Brunswick, N. J., with Dr. Morris F. Shaffer, developed the vaccine from measles virus grown on fertile hen's eggs.

The first vaccinations on a small group of children in Philadelphia, reported as successful last fall, were conducted under the direction of Dr. Joseph Stokes, Jr., of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. Dr. Stokes is directing the present trials of the vaccine on a wider scale and is also director of the U. S. Army's measles commission which is just being formed and at its first meeting is expected to consider the use of the vaccine in Army training camps, according to information from Lieut.-Col. J. S. Simmons, chief, preventive medicine division, office of the Surgeon General.

The vaccination of children in New Jersey and Philadelphia orphan homes, schools and similar institutions had been planned before the present outbreak of measles started. It was delayed for six or eight weeks, however, by the influenza epidemic which struck all the institutions selected for the measles vaccine trials.

The program is now going ahead and a good start has already been made. It is hoped the vaccinations, in spite of the eight weeks set-back due to the flu, will be completed in time to protect the children during the present epidemic. Children in homes and similar institutions usually get their measles six to nine months after children in the rest of the population, because the children in the homes are relatively isolated.

The vaccine will be given to one-half the children in the selected institutions, the other one-half remaining unvaccinated. This will give scientists a control group against which to check the protective value of the vaccine. Only children who have never had measles have been selected for both control and vaccinated groups. Permission of parents or guardians is being obtained before the vaccination is done, and just about one-half of the parents or guardians have given this permission, so there has been no need to draw lots or follow any other method for division of the children into vaccinated and not-to-be vaccinated groups.

Among the questions the scientists hope to have answered by the vaccine trials are how long and how completely the vaccine protects against measles. Until such questions are answered, the vaccine will not be released for general distribution.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Measles Cases Increasing Throughout Nation

LOTS of measles cases between now and the middle of April are expected by the U. S. Public Health Service. The number reported by the states for the week ending March 1 totalled 31,489. The total for the entire nation for the preceding week was 24,079.

These figures show that in one week there are more than one-tenth the number of cases that occurred during the entire year of 1940. That was a low year for measles, with only 276,000 cases reported during the entire year. Last big measles year was in 1938, when the year's total reached 822,800 cases.

The trend for measles is always either low or high, but U. S. Public Health Service records for the past 20 years do not show any regular measles cycles. The ups and downs in measles depend on the fact that nearly everyone is susceptible until he has had an attack. Once all the children who are old enough to