

MEDICINE

To Humans From Cats

Atypical pneumonia, prevalent in recent years, is related to or the same as pneumonia in cats. Symptoms like those of influenza or grippe.

► THE ATYPICAL PNEUMONIA cases which have puzzled physicians for the past several years are related to or perhaps the same as a pneumonia which has afflicted cats during the same period. Evidence for this is reported by Dr. James A. Baker, of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research at Princeton, N. J. (*Science*, Nov. 20)

During the past year or so in the northeastern United States, when atypical pneumonia was attacking humans, cats have frequently been attacked by an infection variously called "nasal catarrh, influenza, or distemper," Dr. Baker reports.

The atypical pneumonia in humans has also masqueraded under symptoms suggesting influenza, grippe, or some similar ailment other than pneumonia, and has often missed being diagnosed as pneumonia, medical scientists believe.

The infection in cats, Dr. Baker found, is due to a virus that forms elementary bodies. Human atypical pneumonia is not caused by the pneumococcus and medical scientists have believed it is due

to infection with a filterable virus.

The cat pneumonia virus, Dr. Baker found from tests with human and cat blood during and after the illness, "is the same as or closely related to the one causing some of the so-called atypical pneumonias in man."

Whether the humans got the pneumonia from the cats or the cats got it from their owners is not as yet clear.

"A number of instances of contact between sick cats and people who subsequently developed atypical pneumonia have been brought to our attention," Dr. Baker states. "For example, Dr. Francis G. Blake, of Yale University, observed an atypical pneumonia in a rural family in Connecticut which occurred where cats were sick with a pneumonia. Dr. C. W. Barber, of the New York State Veterinary College, noted the reverse, where a child sick with atypical pneumonia played with a kitten that later became sick. It may be of epidemiological interest that the disease in man and in cats is occurring simultaneously."

Science News Letter, December 5, 1942

On the debit side, Dr. Lawson states, is the lack of success with this drug when the central nervous system has become involved.

The drug is given daily for 10 days by injection into the patient's vein. Dr. Lawson concludes that, although 53 cases is a small number on which to determine the efficacy of a drug, pentamidine seems "probably the best drug so far produced for early cases of sleeping sickness."

Science News Letter, December 5, 1942

PHOTOGRAPHY

Army Films Saved By Removing Scratches

► IMPORTANT ARMY FILMS which have been accidentally scratched are now being saved. These scratches sometimes appear on the nitrate base of negatives made by the Army because of the difficulty of handling films taken in the field. A method for removing these scratches from the nitrate base has been developed by the United States Army Signal Corps Photographic Laboratory, Army War College, Washington, D. C. The procedure has saved many thousands of feet of film which would be extremely difficult to rephotograph.

The scratched film is run through a tank of chemicals in a manner similar to the developing of movie film. It is then dried so that it will not curl excessively. The solution partially dissolves

MEDICINE

New Remedy Successful

Chemical used in treating African sleeping sickness, pentamidine, has trial reported in *Lancet*. Required only ten days.

► SUCCESSFUL use of a new chemical remedy for African sleeping sickness is reported by Dr. T. L. Lawson, of the Medical Services of Uganda. (*Lancet*, Oct. 24)

The chemical is 4:4 diaminodiphenoxypentone, with the trade name of pentamidine. Out of 53 patients whom Dr. Lawson was able to re-examine three months after treatment, 41 were clinically cured, three were much improved, four improved, and four unaltered or worse.

"As regards gland puncture, 100% cure could be claimed," Dr. Lawson reports, since no trypanosomes were found in the juice obtained by puncturing

glands in the neck in any of the patients after the treatment. Trypanosomes are the germs that cause African sleeping sickness and swollen glands are among the early symptoms.

Advantages of pentamidine, Dr. Lawson points out, are that it swiftly destroys the germs in the peripheral blood and in the gland juice; treatment is complete in 10 days instead of 10 weeks as with other drugs; and toxicity is extremely low. The effective dose for treatment is not more than half the poisoning dose and probably almost one-fifth the killing dose. The speedy results obtained are important both to the patient and from the preventive medical aspect.



SALVAGE—Important Army films which have been accidentally scratched are being saved by a method for removing the scratches.