

move slower than normal, occasionally blocking the blood vessel. The result is an oxygen starvation of the tissues and possibly the brain.

In addition to its direct poisoning effect, alcoholism is accompanied by lack of vitamins B₁ and C which makes the tiny (capillary) blood vessels fragile and may cause hemorrhages in the space between the skull and the brain.

MEDICINE

Inducing German Measles

► A GROUP of women in Australia have volunteered to get German measles, and some of them got the disease, in the fight to protect babies of the future from being born with cataracts or deaf-mutism or heart defects through this disease.

The experiment, conducted by the Hall Institute at Melbourne, Australia, is called to the attention of American physicians by the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Sept. 10).

German measles, medically known as rubella, is a harmless disease to the person having it. But when it attacks a woman during the first three months of pregnancy, it is likely to cause defects of eyes, ears or heart in the unborn baby. Australian doctors were first to notice this relationship. English and American physicians have since confirmed the findings.

Infecting girls and young women with the German measles germ before they married has been suggested as one way of preventing the disease's harmful effects on future babies.

This can be done, the Australian studies, reported by Dr. S. G. Anderson, show. Material washed from the throats of patients with German measles was put into the noses of the women volunteers. Within 13 to 20 days after, some of them developed the typical German measles rash. A few days before they had swollen glands, also typical of the disease. Other persons susceptible to the disease got it from contact with the volunteers who had the experimental disease.

More than half, 14 out of 25, volunteers did not get the disease. Five of these had had the disease six to nine years before, it was learned, and the other nine probably had had it in a mild form that escaped notice at the time. Dr. Anderson thinks this is strong circumstantial evidence that a person who has had the disease will be immune to it for at least nine years. Artificially inducing the disease in a woman at the age of 20 could therefore be expected to protect her against the disease over the period when she would probably be having children.

Application of these results, the JOURNAL points out, will have to take into consideration the existence of a considerable proportion of persons resistant to the disease

The brain damage showed up, Dr. Kessler reported, in impairment of the memory, thinking, and social judgment and, in the worst cases, in difficulty with arithmetic.

The electric rhythm of the brain itself is abnormally fast and there is an absence of the special brain wave pattern known as the alpha rhythm which is ordinarily characteristic of the brain at rest.

Science News Letter, September 17, 1949

who have no history of having had it and the dangers of transmitting other infections.

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MEDICINE

Supposed Breast Cancer Shows Up As "Bobby Pin"

► THE 38-year-old housewife, mother of three children, went to her doctor because of a lump in her breast. Her mother and father had both died of cancer. The doctor, after X-rays and other examination, diagnosed the lump as cancer and advised an operation.

On the operating table the surgeon made a cut below the nipple, started to remove a piece of tissue for microscopic examination, and found a "bobby pin."

Reviewing the X-ray picture of the chest, the "bobby pin" could be seen but had been thought to be on the patient's clothes.

The patient herself had no idea how the pin got into her breast but thought she must have rolled over on it while sound asleep.

"The case appears to be unique," observes Dr. Franklin G. Balch, Jr., of Brookline, Mass. He reports it in the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Sept. 10), as "an unusual problem in the differential diagnosis of tumors of the breast."

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VETERINARY MEDICINE

Weight of Cattle Operates New Insecticide Duster

► THE weight of the animal itself produces the driving blast of air in an insecticide-dusting device for livestock on which Alfred Paul, Jr., Paul Spur, Ariz., received patent 2,480,601.

The cattle dusting takes place in a narrow chute through which the animals are driven. The insecticidal dust from nozzles in the side walls covers them completely. The necessary air blast to carry the dust is created by a bellows-like arrangement over which the animal must walk.

This is described as a depressible floor, over a small pit and mounted on coil

springs. The weight of the animal depresses the floor, compresses the air in the pit, and drives it out to the spray nozzles. By an ingenious arrangement, the proper amount of insecticide dust is added to the air.

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ICHTHYOLOGY

Echo Depth Finders Move In on Old Izaak Walton

► IZAAK WALTON would be astonished and dismayed to learn the latest techniques of catching fish proposed by fishery experts at Lake Success, N. Y.

The leisurely man with a long pole and the day to waste is giving way to impatient men with radar and no time to lose.

J. Renou of the French Navy's press information service told how radar and echo-ranging devices have been adapted to detecting fish and then identifying them.

He told the fishery section of the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources of an echo-ranging device that can detect any school of fish at distances varying from about 650 feet to more than a mile.

Study of the echo pattern enables the fisherman to tell what kind of fish they have located, he said.

Michael Graham, United Kingdom director of fisheries, cited similar work in England which has made it possible to identify herring, sardines and other fish at considerable distances.

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GENERAL SCIENCE

Modern Art Suffers from Our Treatment of Artists

► THE trouble with modern American art is the way we treat our artists and craftsmen, a scientist declared in New York.

Dr. Gene Weltfish, Columbia University anthropologist, explained to the Twentieth International Congress of Americanists that artists suffer from anxiety and insecurity. They have to worry about losing jobs. They are looked down on by some people.

Compare this, Dr. Weltfish suggested, with the life of the basket makers of the Pima Indians of our own Southwest or certain Amazon tribes in South America. These artists and craftsmen are not troubled by the threat of losing their jobs. They are not "pushed around."

They do not have to worry "where the next meal is coming from."

However primitive compared with our standards, these tribes have a better way of life for the artist and craftsman than our modern factory-filled civilization, the anthropologist contended.

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