

MEDICINE

New Drug Stops Rapid Beating of Upper Heart

► EXCESSIVELY RAPID beating of the upper part of the heart, supraventricular tachycardia, can be treated successfully by a relatively new synthetic drug, Drs. Alfred J. Berger and Robert L. Rackliffe of New Britain, Conn., General Hospital report to the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (July 18). The drug, methoxamine hydrochloride, was used to end attacks in two patients.

Science News Letter, August 1, 1953

ELECTRONICS

Explore New Range Of Radio Frequencies

► EXTREMELY HIGH frequency radio waves behave much like those used to carry television programs from coast to coast, the ultra-high and the super-high frequency waves.

Experiments by University of Texas engineers show that EHF waves, as they are abbreviated, can be beamed like radar and micro-wave television. Transmission range for EHF is held down to about 12 miles, however, reports Dr. A. W. Straiton, electrical engineering professor in charge of EHF research.

The extremely high frequency waves penetrate fog, but rain hampers transmission considerably.

The university research team is gathering basic information about EHF that should help developmental engineers find practical uses for it. Dr. Straiton and C. W. Tolbert will report technical aspects of their project to the August meeting of the Institute of Radio Engineers in San Francisco.

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MEDICINE

Heart Disease Discovered In GIs Killed in Action

► IN OVER three-quarters of autopsies of 300 battle deaths or accidental deaths of U. S. soldiers, mostly in their twenties, in Korea, the astonishing discovery has been made that they have gross lesions of their coronary arteries.

A medical team consisting of Maj. William F. Enos, Lt. Col. Robert H. Holmes and Capt. James Beyer reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (July 18) that these seemingly healthy young men had varying degrees of heart disease that had gone unnoticed or had caused them no trouble.

About a fifth of the men had autopsy evidence of real disease with 40% or more narrowing of one of the major vessels of the heart. Three percent, or nine, had complete closing of one or more branches of the blood vessels.

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HUMAN RELATIONS RESEARCH—As part of a study of the satisfactions and dissatisfactions involved in industrial jobs, Cornell scientists are making field observations and interviewing workmen in the Steuben division of Corning Glass Works. Here, for purposes of later comparisons with mass production workers, the researchers observe men working with the same handicraft methods that have been used for hundreds of years.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Health Picture Is Bright

► AMERICA'S HEALTH picture is bright and encouraging even when the polio situation is included.

Only hepatitis, a liver disease, and scarlet fever, together with streptococcal sore throat, are running markedly above the number of cases reported either last year or for the past five years.

Measles, whooping cough and diphtheria are running well below the expected number of cases, based on the experience of the last five years.

Malaria has taken a large drop this year as compared with last year, with the incidence for the first half of this year only 523 cases as compared with 2,939 for the same period last year. Most of this decrease occurred among military personnel, although there has been a substantial reduction among civilians as well.

Some diseases, like smallpox, thanks to vaccination, are inconsequential as public health problems. There have been only 16 cases of smallpox reported since the beginning of the year.

There has been a rise in the number of cases of hepatitis, both the infectious sort and the sort that sometimes follows blood transfusions. This may be due to a better reporting of this disease. Hepatitis was

first reported only last year in the figures that are sent to the U. S. Public Health Service by the various states.

Figures through July 4, the latest that are complete, show 17,390 cases compared with 9,001 for the comparable period of 1952. This disease is relatively tough to handle, since the so-called wonder drugs, antibiotics and sulfas, are not effective curatively. In young people, the disease does not often leave bad effects, but in older persons, it acts something like typhoid fever did in the old days with accompanying liver damage.

The rise of scarlet fever and sore throat caused by streptococci, which is reported along with it, probably means that we are at the peak or approaching the peak in the cyclical occurrence of this disease. There have been 95,067 cases so far this year, compared with 72,305 last year and a 5-year median case rate of 52,805. Antibiotics are effective against scarlet fever, but many of the cases now are so mild that they need little treatment.

The health reports later in the year will include influenza and diseases which are now at a seasonal ebb, but from an overall standpoint the experts consider the health of the nation relatively good.

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