

OPHTHALMOLOGY

New Eye Infection

► **EYE INFECTIONS** from a newly-discovered cause are probably widespread and extremely common, Drs. Alan C. Woods and Ronald M. Woods of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Baltimore, told fellow eye specialists at the meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology in Chicago.

A parasite called toxoplasma seems to be the cause of these infections which doctors in the past have not been able to diagnose exactly.

Until about two years ago this infection was known to occur, with rare exceptions, only in infants. It was present at birth, and as mothers showed no recognized signs of it, the general opinion was that adults were immune to it or that it was latent and produced no symptoms. Young people who have had the disease as infants occasionally have flare-ups that are attributed to the original organism. It was not understood, however, that adults could acquire the disease, Dr. Woods said.

Two years ago Mrs. Helenor Wilder of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington announced that she had identified parasites that appeared to be toxoplasma in tissues from eyes supposedly infected with tuberculosis. Ophthalmologists immediately began to look into eye infections for which no cause had been clearly proved, and found that a fair proportion of such cases revealed the parasite when the proper test was applied.

In view of this development, Dr. Woods and his associates reviewed a number of cases in which a clear-cut diagnosis had

not been found. They had on hand in a freezer samples of blood serum preserved in the course of a diagnostic study of uveitis, an inflammation of the part of the eye that contains pigment. The blood had been used for tests, and any that remained had been kept. The serums from one particular type of uveitis were subjected to the tests for toxoplasmosis.

Of the 201 blood samples tested, the results in 58 gave reason to consider the parasite toxoplasma as the cause of the disease, Dr. Woods reported. In 42 of them the previous studies had revealed no satisfactory explanation of the infection; in ten there was evidence of childhood infection, and in six diagnoses had been doubtful, he said.

Associated with Dr. Woods in the study were Leon Jacobs and Katherine Cook of Bethesda, Md.

Science News Letter, October 24, 1953

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QUESTIONS

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□ □ □

CHEMISTRY—Why are bacteriological warfare experts testing the "red tide" organism? p. 263.

□ □ □

GENERAL SCIENCE—What were some of the recommendations of an evaluating committee concerning the National Bureau of Standards? p. 261.

□ □ □

PHYSICS—What is the Jindivik? p. 261.

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MEDICINE—How have some muscular dystrophy patients been helped? p. 262.

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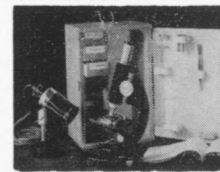
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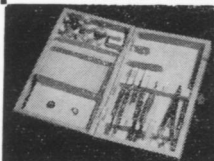
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