

PUBLIC HEALTH

Ideas Sought on Rubbish

► NEW IDEAS are being sought for handling the mountains of waste, garbage and refuse that are created in American communities by everyday living.

Refuse collection and disposal costs over \$1.5 billion annually in the United States, ranking next after schools and roads in community expenditures, a study by the American Public Works Association, Chicago, shows.

"We want the public to throw out ideas on rubbish," Robert D. Bugher, executive director, told SCIENCE SERVICE. "Almost all the money spent on solid waste disposal is used for equipment and operation. Almost none of it is going into research and development of better methods."

Congress has been asked to authorize the expenditure of up to \$1,000,000 for research and technical assistance to help cities overcome the tremendous problem of getting rid of increasing quantities of solid wastes. Similar legislation has been enacted to deal with the handling of liquid and gaseous wastes. Research to develop improved methods of collecting and disposing of solid wastes would result in substantial benefits to the tax-paying public.

One idea proposed for communities of the future is to dispose of wastes through

chutes connected to a system of vacuum tubes which would convey the wastes to a substation for subsequent disposal. Another suggestion is the use of disposable bags for the storage and collection of solid wastes to eliminate foul and unsightly garbage cans. Compressing refuse into briquets for use as industrial fuel and the development of a truck-mounted baling machine to reduce the cost of hauling refuse and facilitate the use of wastes for land reclamation projects have also been suggested.

Mathematical models are proposed to determine the optimum refuse collection system under the many variable conditions that are found to exist in cities and towns from coast to coast. Perfection of home incinerators to prevent the creation of nuisances due to careless operation would be particularly beneficial since on-site disposal of the greater portion of solid wastes would significantly reduce collection operations which account for two-thirds to three-fourths of the total cost.

Ideas for overcoming problems associated with the storage, collection and disposal of garbage and rubbish are being collected by the APWA Research Foundation, 1313 East 60th St., Chicago 37, Ill.

• Science News Letter, 81:340 June 2, 1962

MEDICINE

Doctors Are Reading—

► PROLONGED SEIZURES in four patients as a result of smallpox vaccination were reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association, 180:525, 1962.

Four young children, otherwise normal, developed an illness characterized by sudden onset of convulsions lasting up to two hours about a week to ten days following smallpox vaccination, Dr. Dick Hoefnagel of the Boston University School of Medicine said.

"A rapid, complete recovery and an absence of further convulsive disorder" followed treatment at Boston City Hospital. Dr. Hoefnagel believes this rare reaction is not typical of postvaccinal disease of the central nervous system.

He stated temporary brain swelling could account for the rapidly reversible non-inflammatory disorder of the central nervous system.

Drug Sensitization

Quinine, quinidine and Dilantin were reported to cause a hemorrhaging condition known as thrombocytopenic purpura among three patients whose condition was diagnosed rapidly by clot-retraction. Each suspected drug was mixed with normal blood and small amounts of the patient's serum, along with appropriate controls that proved the cause of the purpura.

All three patients were normal following withdrawal of the offending medication.

Drs. Ronald M. Weintraub, Liberto Pechet and Benjamin Alexander of Beth Israel Hospital, Boston, reported the study (p. 528).

Heart Restarted by Blow

A heart that had stopped beating was restarted by a sharp blow to the chest. Dr. Felix Feraru, New York City, restarted the heart of a patient during abdominal surgery when the heart stopped beating. The 67-year-old man eventually died after the heart stopped again, started and then stopped for the last time (p. 628).

Just Words

A fun column on words has made its appearance in the doctors' official magazine, and its editorship by the Interlingua editor of SCIENCE SERVICE, Alexander Gode, Ph.D., seems most appropriate.

As most "lay" readers and writers of medical articles are keenly aware, a translation of scientific terms is necessary for anyone except the scientists to understand. Interlingua, which is used for publishing abstracts of original papers in more than a score of medical journals, should be a perfect background for the editor of "Just Words" column, which was launched with a Journal editorial (p. 532).

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Do You Know?

Cholesterol is a common constituent of nearly all cells and fluids of the human body.

For every child one to four years of age who dies of *undernourishment* in the United States, 300 die in some countries of Latin America.

About 2.7 billion tons of earth and rock is being moved each year by American miners to supply the metallic and non-metallic *mineral* needs of the country.

The soft, velvety underfur largely accounts for the economic importance of the North Pacific fur seals.

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