

MEDICINE

Free Cancer Treatment

► MISSOURI is the first state west of the Mississippi River to establish a state cancer hospital where state residents are treated free of charge.

The Ellis Fischel State Cancer Hospital, named for a St. Louis surgeon, is an austere brown and beige building at the northern limits of this college and university town, near the new Highway 70.

Although cancer treatment is so expensive that patients of low income cannot afford it, only four states besides Missouri have state cancer hospitals.

There are other hospitals that include the care of indigent patients, but Ellis Fischel is a unique institution where largely rural patients from this Midwestern state can be treated without fee.

Dr. John S. Spratt Jr., chief surgeon of the hospital, said that its 104 beds are used to capacity. But the outpatient work and follow-up examinations far outstrip the amount of inpatient treatment.

A total of 7,729 outpatients received treatment in 1961 and during the first half of 1962. The number of outpatient surgical operations was 2,776, while the number of inpatient operations was 1,486 for this period.

Three times a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the clinic overflows with patients from all over the state. Many of them are brought by chapters of the American Cancer Society to this centrally located hospital. If a patient needs an ambulance, it is provided.

The majority of the cases are typical of rural communities where farmers are exposed to the sun and where indigent people eat substandard food. Skin cancer and cancer of the head and neck are most common, Dr. Spratt said.

Equipment for treatment includes two cobalt units, but Dr. Spratt stated radiation treatment tends to be the kind that old people, who make up the majority of patients, can tolerate. The more toxic experimental drugs are seldom used, although chemotherapy is included along with surgery and X-ray.

Dr. Ellis Fischel, the St. Louis surgeon for whom the hospital was named, was killed some years ago in an automobile accident en route to a meeting of the State Cancer Commission of which he was chairman.

The Ellis Fischel State Cancer Hospital soon will expand to include research under the Missouri Medical Research Foundation, although its first emphasis will continue to be on humane and adequate treatment for cancer patients.

On a rotation plan of from three to six months, a number of surgeons serve on the Ellis Fischel staff. They come from the University of Kansas and the University of Missouri Medical Centers, from Washington University, St. Louis University, from the St. Louis city and St. Louis county hospitals, and from St. John's and the Jewish Hospital in St. Louis.

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ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGN—In Denmark the Cancer Society is educating 600,000 school children in the dangers of lung cancer as a result of smoking cigarettes. This poster was made into small gummed stickers for gluing onto match boxes or sticking onto letters.

numerically small," said Dr. Roger S. Mitchell of Denver, Colo., "the risk of spreading other infectious respiratory diseases by this practice is relatively great."

Although most tuberculosis is transmitted through the air, if a patient with infectious tuberculosis were to sip from a communion cup, those who sipped after him would unquestionably be endangered," Dr. Mitchell explained, adding that simply wiping the lip of the cup is essentially valueless except as an esthetic gesture.

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ORNITHOLOGY

Nearly Extinct Hawaiian Bird Gets Helping Hand

► A NEARLY EXTINCT bird, which is also the official state bird of Hawaii, is getting a new lease on life with the help of man.

Thirty nine (Hawaiian geese) are being imported from England to help bring up the bird's population in Hawaii. Only about 60 live in all of the islands.

W. W. Holt, director of the state's Division of Forestry, said the 30 nene will be placed in a sanctuary on the island of Maui.

There are actually more nene in England than in all of the Hawaiian Islands. The Hawaiian geese due to arrive in Honolulu are descendants of a group sent to England from Hawaii in 1952.

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Doctors Are Reading

Ulcerative Colitis Cause

► MENTAL STRESS causes ulcerative colitis, physicians are reading in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

It is not the body alone that produces the bleeding condition but a "complex psychobiological state" that occurs in persons who are predisposed, three staff members of the Neuropsychiatric Institute, University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine reported, 181:463, 1962.

Depression, which is commonly observed in these patients, is not due to the severe weakening effects of the disease, but to a real or fancied "object loss," an accompanying editorial points out (p. 549).

The investigators, Drs. Donald T. Fullerton, Edward J. Kollar and Alex B. Caldwell, said 90% of the 47 patients studied had histories of other psychosomatic and psychiatric disorders.

Cleft Palate Speech

Another Californian, Dr. Robert E. Berner of the department of surgery, Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto, warned that special care must be

given in operations on a child with a cleft palate so that the child's speech will not be affected (p. 558). In the child just learning good speech after cleft palate surgery, a relatively minor upset may cause the speech pattern to revert to a cleft palate type.

Doctors Need School

Continuing medical education for doctors is advocated in some 60 pages of editorial comment and college listings of courses (p. 548). It is not enough to read the medical journals and attend scientific meetings, the official journal of the AMA points out. Formal accreditation of postgraduate medical courses by the AMA is expected to begin in 1964.

Communion Cup Dangerous

Communion cup dangers: The churches that use a "community" communion cup are endangering the health of their members, a doctor replied in answer to a question on whether the tubercle bacillus may be so transmitted (p. 568).

"While the risk of spreading tuberculosis by the common communion cup must be