

MEDICINE

When AMA Doctors Met Hepatitis in Cancer

► WATCH OUT for hepatitis in cancer patients, doctors are warned.

This virus disease, if it is not diagnosed early, can contribute to death from other complications long before cancer would have killed the victim.

Hepatitis is often mistaken for simple jaundice in terminal cases of liver cancer, Dr. Robert S. Nelson of the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute told the American Medical Association meeting in Atlantic City.

There is no direct connection between the cancer and the infectious disease. However, Dr. Nelson said, "because of the frequent necessity for blood transfusion, cancer patients might be expected to develop hepatitis more frequently than the average older age person." Infected blood often causes hepatitis.

Among various types of cancer patients at the M. D. Anderson Hospital, 26 cases of acute viral hepatitis occurred, the average age being 56 years. Physical examination showed the moderately enlarged and tender liver of hepatitis in nearly all the patients,

but none had liver cancer.

"The number of fatal and serious complications directly related to hepatitis in this small group of cancer patients is impressive," Dr. Nelson said. "In three patients death occurred within a short time, and in one other after development of cirrhosis over a four-year period. Another patient is still suffering from chronic active hepatitis, with the outcome in doubt. Three other patients died following complications which ordinarily would not have been lethal except for the additional trauma of infectious hepatitis."

Although the cancerous condition did not affect the hepatitis in itself, the weakness and malnourishment of the cancer patients had an adverse effect on the course of the hepatitis. Because of delay in diagnosis, treatment was frequently not started for two to four weeks.

Dr. Nelson said steroid therapy had been effective in the younger age group. The standard treatment of bed rest, and high caloric, high protein, high carbohydrate and moderate fat diet was used in all cases.

Dr. Richard De Elizalde, also at M. D. Anderson, assisted with the study.

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Balloon Clears Arteries

► A TINY BALLOON inserted into dangerously clogged arteries at the tip end of a long tube is saving lives by sweeping away the blood clots.

A 29-year-old resident in surgery invented the device, which has not yet been put on the market. It has been used on 22 patients at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Cincinnati. Dr. Thomas J. Fogarty, now at the University of Oregon Medical School, originated the new technique while at the Cincinnati hospital.

One of the outstanding exhibits at the American Medical Association meeting in Atlantic City is this balloon-catheter technique, demonstrated by Dr. Fogarty and by Dr. John J. Cranley, also of the Good Samaritan Hospital.

"The method is used in true surgical emergencies," Dr. Cranley told SCIENCE SERVICE.

Two types of clots can block an artery. Thrombi stay lodged in the places in which they are formed. Emboli break away from their original sites and may lodge anywhere in an artery.

The type of operation he uses is not new, Dr. Cranley said, but the balloon attachment is. The soft material adjusts to the shape of the artery, so if arterial sclerosis is present the artery is not damaged. Local anesthesia is used on the patients, whose ages have ranged from 50 to 80, Dr. Cranley told the Society for Vascular Surgery meeting.

A small incision is made either in the groin or other location nearest the clot, and the tube is inserted as far as it will go. The balloon inflates and is filled with blood, carrying the clot or clots with it when it is withdrawn.

"The new device has made the operation much easier and safer," Dr. Cranley said. "The hearts of these patients are usually bad, and to put them through a major operation is too much. We recommend using anticoagulants following the removal of the clots."

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Lung Disease Ulcers Link

► SUFFERING from an ulcer? Then have your chest examined. Illogical though this may sound, there's a good reason for doing so. Doctors have found that there is a high correlation between those suffering from ulcers and those afflicted with lung disease.

In a recent survey at the Lahey Clinic in Boston, 28% of 631 patients with chronic pulmonary emphysema, a disease of the lungs, also had chronic ulcers. Dr. Arthur S. Leon of the U.S. Army Hospital, LaChapelle-St. Mesmin, France, told the American Medical Association meeting in Atlantic City that the cause for this association of the two conditions is not known.

However, it is believed the acidity of the digestive system is increased as a result of the high amounts of carbon dioxide and ammonia found in the blood of persons with emphysema.

It may also be that the two conditions are both effects of the same cause, such as smoking or perhaps hereditary factors, rather than one being the cause of the other. Nevertheless, a definite relationship exists.

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Calories Control Weight

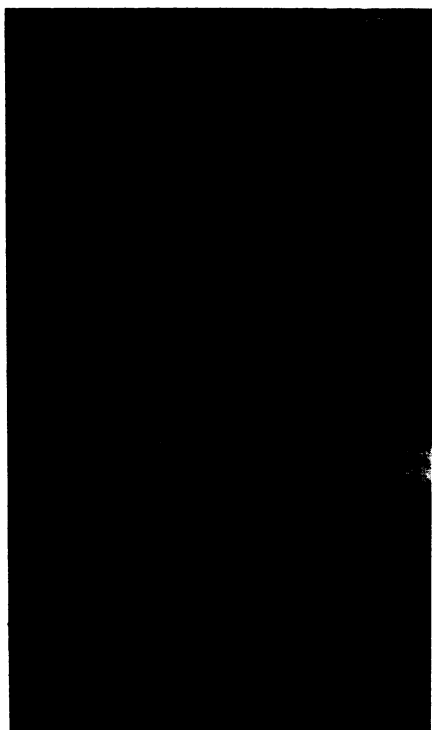
► IT IS NOT so much what you eat as how much that determines whether or not you will lose weight.

Three overweight patients placed on 1,200-calorie-a-day diets all lost approximately the same amount of weight, despite the fact that they were fed different types of food. One subsisted on a diet high in carbohydrates, one on a high fat diet, and the third on a diet high in both protein and fat.

All lost weight at the same rate, although the patient on the high protein-high fat diet felt less hungry, due to the fact that a diet of this nature is more satisfying. Meat satisfies hunger better than potatoes, and is better nutritionally.

The research done by Dr. Laurance W. Kinsell and his co-workers of Highland-Alameda County Hospital, Oakland, Calif., was reported to the American Medical Association meeting at Atlantic City.

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NASA

TROPICAL TRAINING—The 16 astronauts of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration program participated in tropic survival training from June 3 through June 6 at Albrook Air Force Base, Canal Zone. Astronaut L. Gordon Cooper Jr. is shown getting a drink of water during jungle training.