

MEDICINE

Quackery Gives Vain Hope

People, especially the elderly, are victims of quacks who prey upon the miseries and fears of those who seek relief from pain and disease at any cost—By Faye Marley

► QUACKERY is taking an estimated billion dollars a year from scared people who will try anything to keep from dying.

The sad reality is that they might live longer if they followed the advice and treatment of reputable physicians who prescribed properly tested remedies.

The elderly are among the most numerous dupes. They spend about \$250 million a year in their vain search for permanent relief from arthritis, rheumatism and related pains—the most chronic complaints affecting some nine million persons over 45.

Grandmother fears cholesterol in her blood, so she takes a drug that causes her hair to fall out. Grandfather fears a heart attack so he buys an electric boiler sold by quacks who claim it will destroy the fat and cholesterol in his blood and prevent a stroke.

At the second National Congress on Medical Quackery in Washington, cosponsored by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the American Medical Association, a special report concerned mechanical, electronic and thermal devices that are claimed to relieve pain or "tone" the body.

FDA Commissioner George P. Larrick told how Federal agents, during the 18-month period ending last December, seized 97 falsely advertised food supplements, 49 drugs and 13 worthless therapeutic devices.

In Chicago alone authorities recently seized and destroyed 50 tons of books, pamphlets and other literature containing false information on nutrition.

Among the "remedies" that cost arthritis sufferers a quarter of a billion dollars a year are treatments ranging from "immune milk" to uranium. Vibrators and other devices, liniments, food supplements and "treatment centers" attract victims who are willing to pay any amount for relief.

Although bona fide physicians will sometimes restrict salt use, especially if hormones are being used, the National Institute of Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases, Bethesda, Md., the Arthritis and Rheumatism Foundation and other agencies say there is no scientific evidence that specific items in the diet of the average arthritis patient will either cure or benefit his condition. Citrus fruits and limited starches, advisable in normal diets, are also good for arthritics, of course.

"The Arthritis Hoax," Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 297, describes some of the frauds used to prey on arthritis sufferers.

In the treatment of cancer, attention is currently focused on Krebiozen, as one of the "unproved" remedies.

A whole series of "unproved" methods has been reported by the American Cancer Society, in the magazine CA, beginning in

1961. Krebiozen was discussed in the last of the series.

Each of the articles on these "unproved" treatments ends with this statement:

"After careful study of the literature and other information available to it, the American Cancer Society has found no acceptable evidence that treatment (with the specific remedy) results in any objective benefit in the treatment of cancer in humans."

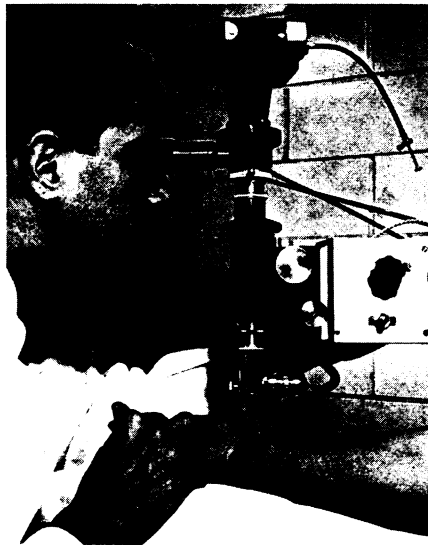
The term "objective," of course, does not take into consideration the "subjective" benefit that patients believe they have received by their misplaced faith in whatever treatment they have accepted.

Scientists are concerned with tests that can show proof of benefit in medical treatment. The best legislative and individual efforts to fight quackery in medicine will fail unless the public is enlightened.

"But if the remedy is harmless?" the diehards continue to ask.

The answer of the scientist is that there is no harmless quackery, even if the proponents and the patients both sincerely believe in it. The greatest harm lies in the stopping of the scientific search.

Some of the "unproved" methods of cancer treatment reported by CA Magazine include: Anticancerogen Z-50, distributed to physicians only; the Glover serum, proposed



IIT Research Institute

THROUGH A NEEDLE—Dr. Charles Long II of Western Reserve University school of medicine microscopically examines subsurface living tissue in the arm of a patient, without incision or removal of tissue, through a needle developed by IIT Research Institute, Chicago.

in Toronto, Canada; Carcin and Neo-Carcin, proposed in 1902 by Dr. Jacob Pawlotzky in articles later printed in European countries; dietary treatment by the Gerson method, proposed by the late Dr. Max B. Gerson and used in a sanitarium near New York during his lifetime; Mucorhycin, the treatment used by the Drosnes-Lazenby Cancer Clinic in Pittsburgh; and the Revici Cancer Control of lipid therapy, proposed by Dr. Emanuel Revici, scientific director of the Institute of Applied Biology, New York.

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Surgery Helps Survival Of Aged Cancer Patients

► SURGERY is bringing about a marked improvement in survival of aged cancer patients.

With the increase of aged population there has been an increase in cancer patients, but in the period from 1935 to 1939 only 34% of cancer sufferers 75 years of age or older underwent surgery. From 1955 to 1959, however, 56% were treated surgically, which for a number of types of cancer meant that many more patients lived longer than previously.

Dr. Sidney J. Cutler of the National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Md., and Henry Eisenberg, Connecticut State Tumor Registry, Hartford, Conn., reported these findings at a New York Academy of Sciences conference in New York.

At the same session, some 200 cases of spontaneous regression of cancer were reported by Dr. Tilden C. Everson, University of Illinois College of Medicine, Chicago, Ill.

These regressions, however, were all that have been reported since 1900. Possible factors responsible for the disappearance of the tumor or cancerous condition include endocrine (ductless gland) influences, unusual sensitivity to usually inadequate treatment, fever or acute infection, allergic or immune reaction, interference with nutrition of the cancer and removal of the cancer-causing agent.

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New Laboratory Test For Cancer of Kidney

► A NEW laboratory test for detecting cancer of the kidney before symptoms become apparent was reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association, 185:769, 1963, by Drs. Elias Amador and Warren E. C. Wacker, with Theodore Zimmerman, all of Harvard Medical School. Kidney cancers do not show any apparent symptoms in one-third to one-half of the patients they attack.

The new test is based on measuring the activity of an enzyme called alkaline phosphatase by analyzing the urine. Dr. Wacker previously found, in collaboration with Harvard associate Dr. Lionel E. Dorfman, that an elevated level of another enzyme called lactic dehydrogenase in the urine can indicate cancers of the kidney or bladder.

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