

MEDICINE—AMA MEETING

Teen-Age Pregnancy

Doctors should assume the role of teacher, and show consideration to teen-age mothers-to-be, who often lack training in proper diet and other needs during pregnancy.

► THE "HAMBURGER and coke crowd" needs more education in human biology, a U.S. Navy obstetrician told SCIENCE SERVICE.

Not only have illegitimate births increased by more than 50% in the past 20 years, but between one-third and one-half of teen-age brides are faced with obstetric problems at the beginning of their marriage.

"I do not set myself up as judge and jury when a pregnant teen-ager comes to me for help," Capt. James P. Semmens, chief, obstetrics and gynecology service, U.S. Naval Hospital, Oakland, Calif., said in San Francisco.

"A doctor has to be a teacher because these young girls have not had the proper training in high school."

Overweight was the leading problem in 12,847 teen-age pregnant girls surveyed by data processing in 22 naval hospitals during a two-year period, Capt. Semmens said.

These mothers-to-be were accustomed to eating hamburgers and baked beans or ham sandwiches. They had to be trained how to eat properly to keep their weight down and their babies nourished.

Capt. Semmens said he expects teen-agers to compose a larger segment of obstetric patients in the years ahead.

At the American Medical Association meeting Capt. Semmens advised doctors to treat their teen-age patients as they would older pregnant women.

Many obstetricians believe it is commendable to avoid cesarean births in teen-agers to prevent scarring of the womb, Capt. Semmens said. But long natural labor can lead to psychological scarring of the young mother, as well as maiming or death of the baby when forceps are used.

When a teen-age girl is allowed to remain in labor as long as 24 hours before the doctor decides to perform a cesarean operation, she may jeopardize her future fertility or pregnancies.

Teen-agers properly trained by doctors who act as counsellors are mature and capable obstetrical patients as they approach delivery, Capt. Semmens has found. When they are faced with problems of prolonged labor, abnormal presentation of the body or pelvic measurement, they are entitled to the same consideration and obstetrical methods as older women in labor.

Although the American Medical Association as an organization has taken no stand on birth control, Dr. Mary S. Calderone, medical director, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, told the AMA that no physician should be satisfied with private office advice given to a privileged few who ask for contraceptives.

Every last childbearing woman, in every last public hospital and health facility,

should be offered "as routinely and conscientiously as she is offered every other health service, the means of regulating her own fertility according to her health needs and her conscience," Dr. Calderone said.

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Outlook for Cancer

► BREAST CANCER is curable and the outlook for its treatment is more optimistic than the death rate of 30,000 a year indicates.

Cancer confined to the breast would seldom, if ever, cause death, Dr. Thomas L. Dao of the Roswell Park Memorial Institute, Buffalo, N. Y., told SCIENCE SERVICE.

"It is by dissemination that breast cancer and other tumors show their malignant features," Dr. Dao said. Early discovery and treatment are the greatest hope, he said.

Strictly speaking, women do not die of breast cancer but of lung or liver failure because these vital organs are invaded by tumor cells.

In the case of lung involvement, Dr. Dao

explained that there are two well-defined types. One is solid tumor, or a nodular type. The other is invasion of the lymphatics. Both cause death by respiratory or breathing failure.

For both conditions, Dr. Dao and his co-workers have removed the ovaries of younger women who have not yet reached the menopause. Surgery on women past the menopause has consisted of removal of the adrenal glands. Removal of the ovaries may cause a slowing up or regression of the cancer spread, and later the adrenal glands also can be removed if the growth continues.

If the lung involvement is nodular, 45% of the patients are likely to respond. Only 20% of the patients can be expected to improve when the lymphatics are invaded. Experimental work with animals, however, is showing greater promise.

Treatment is urgent, especially when X-ray shows lymphatic involvement. Patients suffer early and severe symptoms, thought to be due to stiffening of the lung substance. Postmenopausal women often improve when they are given corticoids, which aid their hormone deficiency.

In cases of liver metastases, Dr. Dao said early obstruction of the ducts causes jaundice, which if untreated can progress to liver failure and death. In nodular liver involvement there is no jaundice, but biochemical tests measure liver failure.

Dr. Dao, with Drs. Takuma Nemoto and John Ingall, exhibited their work with metastatic breast cancer at the American Medical Association meeting in San Francisco.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Mental Health Peril Seen Rising With Automation

► MENTAL HEALTH will become the primary concern of industrial safety experts as physical accidents are reduced to a minimum.

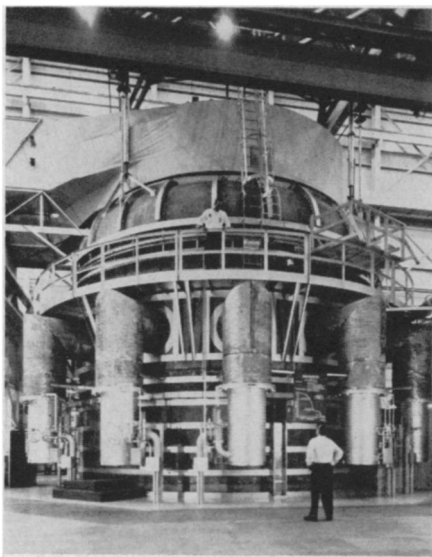
Automation and technological change have greatly altered the nature of industrial safety problems, and will continue to do so, Seymour Wolfbein told The President's Conference on Occupational Safety in Washington, D.C. He is director of the Department of Labor's Office of Manpower, Automation, and Training.

More and more the emphasis must shift to dealing with the nervous and mental strains produced by the problems of life in a technological environment, he said.

These problems include the huge responsibilities placed on some individuals, the increasing demands for speed and precision, the accelerating pace of change and the feeling of uselessness experienced by workers in an automated factory.

Due to a longer time spent in training and an earlier retirement age, Mr. Wolfbein said, the average U.S. male is working fewer years than he was in 1950. Since each working day is more valuable now, increased safety measures to prevent job-time loss are more important than ever.

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Corning Glass Works

SPACE SIMULATOR—Large spacecraft will be tested under conditions of pressure, temperature and solar radiation found in space between Mars and Venus in this six-story space environment simulator at the Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md. Fused silica which has near-zero heat expansion, is used in the solar simulator portion of the chamber. It was developed by Corning Glass Works.