

MEDICINE

AMA Shifts Criticism

The American Medical Association has shifted its attack to the proposed heart disease, cancer and stroke plan, again criticizing government "interference"—By Faye Marley

► THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION shifted its attack on Government medical legislation from the Medicare program to the proposed heart disease, cancer and stroke plan now being discussed.

Overburdening of medical manpower was cited by Dr. James Z. Appel of Lancaster, Pa., president of the AMA, "particularly when it is considered that this new experiment would be added to another new broad program—Medicare."

Testifying before the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, Dr. Appel and Dr. Hugh H. Hussey, who resigned from the President's Commission on Heart Disease, Cancer and Stroke, both emphasized that the proposed medical centers would hamper the existing pattern of research, education and patient care.

"It appears to me," said Dr. Hussey, "that the demand for general practitioners in communities across the country would be aggravated by this program which would lure young physicians to Government-financed medical centers."

The same group of persons 65 years of age and older who will reap benefits from Medicare, Dr. Appel pointed out, include those greatly affected by the three leading diseases.

"The combination of the two programs may cause an insatiable demand and exceed

the availability of manpower and facilities," Dr. Appel said.

There is no scientific evidence, both men stated, to support claims that a crash program on the three diseases would either produce a cure or provide any better care than Americans are now receiving.

"It is a scientific fact of life," said Dr. Appel, "that increased money alone, whether public or private, will not bring a breakthrough in heart disease, cancer, stroke or any other disease. Claims that cancer and heart disease are capable of being prevented or cured at this time are misleading . . ."

The AMA is in complete agreement with the stated aims of the legislation, Dr. Appel said, referring to the objective of reducing the occurrence of the three diseases, as well as deaths caused by them. In agreement with the position taken at the June convention of the AMA by its House of Delegates, he opposes the methods proposed to attain these objectives.

The Senate-approved legislation, and similar legislation being discussed by the House Committee, would create a network of federally supervised medical complexes across the country with a medical school and a hospital at its core. The AMA witnesses asked for public discussion and understanding of the program.

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PSYCHOLOGY

New Smoking Report

► A FORTHCOMING report from the U.S. Public Health Service will disclose details of a new program to reduce cigarette smoking by the use of psychiatry.

The report, to be made public shortly, is a sophisticated analysis of why most individuals start to smoke and why, psychologically, it is difficult for most to stop. It will be specifically geared to a "don't smoke" campaign aimed at young people.

The report is a summary of a private meeting of about 40 leading psychiatrists, psychologists and behavioral scientists from all over the country. The meeting was held at Beaver College, Philadelphia.

The report's recommendations are to be backed up by a \$2 million appropriation for continued research into the psychology of smoking. Dr. Daniel Horne, of the Public Health Service, said that this item is in the 1966 budget and little opposition is expected in the Congress.

If the \$2 million item is approved, it will represent a five-fold increase in funds for research into this aspect of the smoking controversy. Dr. Horne said that during fiscal 1963, about \$400,000 was spent for this purpose.

Specifically, the budget item calls for the establishment of a National Clearing House for data on the psychology of smoking. In addition, funds will be used for continuing research studies on the subject through grants to university projects and community efforts.

On Capitol Hill, a spokesman for Sen. Maurine Neuberger (D-Oreg.), leading opponent of cigarette smoking, said that the Senator would channel her efforts in this area to support for the new Public Health Service program.

Sen. Neuberger was a leader in the unsuccessful effort to give the Federal Trade Commission authority to regulate cigarette advertising.

This bill approved by Congress bars the Federal Trade Commission from action and limits control to a warning label on cigarette packages.

Both the Senator's office and the Public Health Service emphasized that the new program was wholly apart from the biochemical research studies now being undertaken on the carcinogenic effects of tobacco smoke.

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CHEMISTRY

Structure of Saccharin Molecule Determined

► WHAT DO SWEET-TASTING things have in common? The recent determination of the arrangement of atoms in saccharin, the artificial sweetener, may eventually help provide an answer to this question.

Sweet-tasting substances do not belong to one chemical family and scientists have not been able to find a characteristic common to all.

Dr. Y. Okaya, an International Business Machines Corporation crystallographer in Yorktown Heights, N.Y., found that the basic structure of the molecule consists of two joined rings, one containing six atoms, and the other containing five. He also found that the five-sided ring was flat, not puckered as is normally the case in this type of ring. The X-ray analysis also showed that the six-sided benzene ring was squashed, indicating an unstable state, and that the distance between the two next-nearest neighbor atoms in saccharin is about 25% greater than has ever been observed in any molecule.

Because slight changes in structure or chemical composition of the saccharin molecule have a profound effect on its taste, Dr. Okaya believes that a determination of the common factor among sweet substances could very well come from a detailed comparison of the saccharin molecule with its derivatives.

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IBM

SHAPE OF SACCHARIN—In an experiment to determine the shape of the saccharin molecule, a tiny crystal of saccharin was placed in the apparatus in the foreground. A beam of X-rays was directed at different planes of atoms in the crystal and the intensity of the reflected X-rays was measured. Using an International Business Machines computer, Dr. Y. Okaya, an IBM scientist, holding a model of the molecule, deduced how atoms are arranged in the crystal.