

# Leukemia Remissions

**Complete remissions occurred in six patients suffering from lymphocytic leukemia which can almost never be controlled to this extent**

➤ **SIX LEUKEMIA** patients have had complete remissions of the disease varying in length from seven months to three years, following drug or X-ray treatment, the American Association for Cancer Research meeting in Denver was told.

The patients suffered from either chronic lymphocytic leukemia or a closely related malignancy called leukolymphosarcoma. In these diseases, the spleen is enlarged and a source of abnormal leukemic cells.

This type of leukemia almost never can be controlled to this extent.

Four of the treatments were by X-ray to the spleen, a type of therapy largely abandoned after World War II because potent drugs and hormones became available and because inferior X-ray equipment and improper dose schedules made the treatment unsatisfactory at that time.

The other two patients received the

drug chlorambucil, but X-ray appeared to be more effective. The patients responded more quickly and there were more complete remissions.

Dr. Tin Han of Roswell Park Memorial Institute, Buffalo, N.Y., who reported the cases, said studies are now under way to see if earlier and more intensive radiation can increase remission periods.

In the past, it has been common practice to defer treatment as long as the patients had few symptoms because it was believed long-term control was unattainable and that drug therapy or X-rays would only make the leukemic person more ill.

Both diseases involve the overproduction of abnormal lymphocytes in such lymphoid tissues as the spleen, liver and lymph nodes.

Complete remission means the return of the patient to an apparently

normal state of health for a period of time. In these cases, tumor masses disappeared and the enlarged spleen became normal; there was a return to a normal blood count and a normal bone marrow without leukemic cell infiltration.

Ten other instances of complete remission of these diseases have been reported by other investigators in the last 10 years, Dr. Han said.

These patients were treated either by spleen removal, X-ray treatment to the spleen and lungs, or by the drug prednisone. There is a question as to whether those diseases were really malignant, however, since no relapses occurred during many years of observation, which is uncommon in leukemia.

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## MEDICINE

### Cancer of the Liver Blamed on Viruses

➤ **VIRUSES** have been implicated as a cause of cancer of the liver for the first time. Dr. Joseph W. Beard, director of the virus-cancer research laboratories and professor of surgery and virology at Duke University, Durham, N.C., reported to a meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research on results of a series of experiments in which chickens were inoculated with a strain of virus called MC-29. About half the animals examined developed liver tumors.

"So far as I know," he said in an interview, "no one has ever seen a virus-induced tumor of the liver."

He added that the experiments also represented the first time a chicken tumor virus had induced cancer in any entodermal tissue, which includes the pancreas, stomach and intestines as well as the liver.

Until this time, the viruses had been able to induce tumors only in blood-forming tissues and mesodermal tissues which include connective tissue and bone, he said.

Associated with him in the current study were Drs. Zahary Mladenov of Sofia, Bulgaria, formerly with the Duke laboratories, Ursula Heine and Dorothy Beard.

Dr. Beard pointed out that a high incidence of liver cancer is associated with certain geographical areas, suggestive of a possible viral origin of the disease.

Although it is relatively rare in the United States, in certain parts of Africa, India and China, it accounts for as much as 20% of all cancers.

Dr. Beard said the finding may have important research implications because it will furnish scientists with a method of comparing animal tumors with normal tissue from which the tumors derived.

"Ordinarily, this is extremely difficult with other types of tumors," he said.

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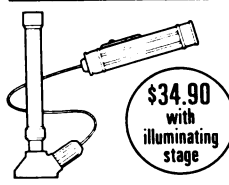
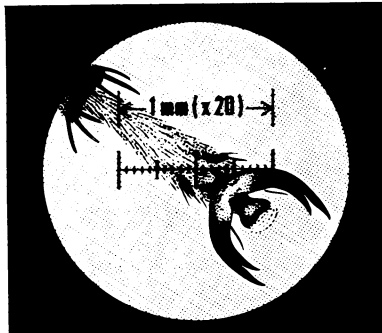
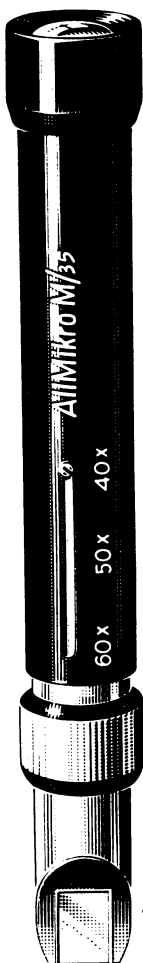
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