

Encephalitis Spreading

Early spring floods near Dallas fostered the growth of mosquitoes that are blamed for the encephalitis epidemic

► SIX DEATHS from St. Louis encephalitis have occurred in Dallas County, Texas, since the beginning of the epidemic in July.

Two separate outbreaks have now been reported, Dr. Van C. Tipton, epidemiologist, Texas State Department of Health, Austin, told SCIENCE SERVICE.

In Dallas County there were 91 suspected cases, with 53 confirmed as of Aug. 24. In Nueces County and Corpus Christi, 68 suspected cases had been reported, six of which had been confirmed.

"Extensive mosquito control programs are in operation in both of these areas," Dr. Tipton said.

In Brooks County, Texas, there have been reports of one confirmed and one suspected case of St. Louis encephalitis, and in the Panhandle, in Hale County, 19 suspected and two confirmed cases of Western encephalitis are reported.

One person reported dead of encephalitis was later found to have died

of a bacterial abscess, Dr. Hal J. Dewlett, City Health Director of Dallas, told SCIENCE SERVICE. He said the present epidemic of encephalitis, spread by mosquitoes, had "built up very gradually."

"The epidemic was much more explosive in Houston two years ago," Dr. Dewlett said. "Most of our cases have been in Dallas proper, although some have been spreading to the surrounding county. The early floods provided a means for mosquito growth and we have never had adequate spray equipment."

Spraying by Air Force planes was with the insecticide Malathion "because it is safest," Dr. Dewlett explained.

In 1933 the St. Louis metropolitan area experienced a major epidemic of 1,130 reported cases of the disease bearing the city's name. Since then sporadic cases and small or moderate epidemics have occurred in the lower Ohio River Valley and in the Southwest, particularly in Texas and in California during late summer and early

fall. Epidemics have only followed conditions favorable for mosquito breeding.

Many investigating groups have suggested a basic transmission cycle in birds and certain *Culex* mosquitoes. *C. pipiens*, *C. tarsalis* and *C. quinquefasciatus* are the only *Culex* species known to be of epidemiologic importance.

For the year 1965, 2,703 cases of all types of encephalitis including 173 deaths were reported to the Neurotropic Viral Diseases Unit of the Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta, Ga. The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 18:262, 1966, stated that more than half of the cases were of unknown cause, 36% were post-infectious encephalitis, mostly from mumps, measles and chickenpox, or varicella. But there were 19 cases of the disease caused by herpes simplex virus, resulting in 11 deaths.

More than 30 persons died in Texas in 1964 in connection with the Houston epidemic of St. Louis encephalitis.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Skin, Scuba Diving Took Lives of 86 in 1965

► AT LEAST 86 Americans drowned while skin or scuba diving in 1965.

All were above average in athletic and aquatic ability, Daniel P. Webster of the U.S. Public Health Service's Division of Accident Prevention said in Public Health Reports, 81:703, 1966.

Diving alone instead of in pairs, diving under adverse weather or water conditions, and lacking or failing to use emergency equipment were among the causes of death. Also, revival chances were poor because 30 minutes went by before two-thirds of the victims were found.

In skin diving, the swimmer uses only the air supply carried by his lungs or obtained by an underwater breathing tube called a snorkel. In scuba diving a supplementary air supply tank is used, from which the sport derives its name—self-contained underwater breathing apparatus.

Only four women were among the 86, of whom 60 were scuba divers and 26 were skin divers. Florida with 21 victims and California with 19 led 28 states listing those drowned from underwater diving.

Almost half of the drownings took place in oceans, gulfs and bays. Inland waters were next in the number of incidents, but three drownings occurred in swimming pools.

Better training and a higher minimum age, not less than 16 or 17 years, are recommended for all who attempt underwater swimming. The National Association of Underwater Instructors (the instructional branch of the Underwater Society of America) and the Young Men's Christian Association conduct training programs offering certification of instructors.



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

CRY OF HUNGER—This tiny girl in Teheran, Iran, weighs only 12 pounds. Her stomach is bloated from lack of food, but she and many other children are nursed back to health by UNICEF (United Nations Children's Emergency Fund) with a diet of milk, orange juice, vegetables, beef, liver and other foods.