

Cheap Kidney Developed

A low-cost machine to wash kidneys of dangerous chemicals will soon be used to sustain numerous patients

► A LOW-COST kidney machine that can be used at home will be available in a few months, Dr. Willem J. Kolff of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation told SCIENCE SERVICE.

Speaking at the International Congress of Nephrology in Washington, D.C., Dr. Kolff said the machine would sell under \$200.

The initial cost of presently used custom-made models requires an initial outlay of an estimated \$14,000 for purchase and installation of a machine in hospitals, and a yearly expenditure per patient of about \$10,000 a year. Dr. Kolff estimates the annual cost of home use of the new artificial kidney (which is adapted from a washing ma-

chine), to be around \$1,500, since parts are re-usable and families of patients can be trained to use it.

"The matter of cost is the preponderant deterrent from transplantation and dialysis," Dr. Kolff said, "and the cost of maintaining a patient on the chronic dialysis program varies between \$20,000 and approximately \$6,000 per year, according to the most optimistic figures."

Kidney transplants, however, are preferable to dialysis among the 50% to 60% of patients in whom transplants are successful, Dr. Kolff said. "Both methods aim at complete rehabilitation of the patient," he added. "Progress in one is a challenge to the other. It is for the patient to choose which of the two methods he wants to try."

In practice neither of these two methods is available to thousands of people who need them, however, he added. "It is unrealistic to estimate the cost of kidney transplantation at less than \$10,000 to \$20,000. In a world in which billions are spent for a limited war, other billions to fly to the moon, and one billion dollars per year for cosmetics, money cannot be found to restore patients now dying from chronic renal failure."

At the Cleveland Clinic Hospital, from January 1963 to December 1965, 79 cadaver kidneys were transplanted in 69 patients, 10 of whom were receiving their second transplant, which has a better chance of success than the first.

Seventeen of these patients have lived more than one year following transplant, but the percentage of survivals continues better in cases where kidneys of related donors have been matched for transplant.

Dr. Eli A. Friedman of the Downstate Medical Center, Brooklyn, told SCIENCE SERVICE that the annual cost to a patient for hemodialysis at the Center was about \$10,000 a year.

He told the meeting that in September 1965 a 14-bed automated hemodialysis center commenced operation.

Fifteen patients at the center have been fully rehabilitated, Dr. Friedman said, and there have been no deaths.

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Sweet Sherry Causes Teeth to Decalcify

► SWEET SHERRY has been found to cause decalcification of teeth, but a much more surprising culprit may be toothpaste.

A test developed at Melbourne University detects decalcification by using a stain that shows up protein in the tooth structure.

If protein is visible, it means that some decalcification has taken place.

Decalcification makes teeth chalky and soft. Prof. E. Storey, head of the department said. Similar changes in tooth enamel were noted when the same tests were applied to certain toothpastes but it was not yet certain that toothpastes produced decalcification.

"We still cannot understand why sweet sherry could cause decalcification. It is no more acid than whisky, which does not appear to cause surface changes," he said.

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