

Medical Sciences Notes

ADHESIVE SUTURES

Spray Stops Bleeding in Animals

A new aerosol spray, successful with experimental animals, promises to be lifesaving for humans whose bleeding wounds cannot be stopped by conventional sutures.

Lieut. Col. Teruo Matsumoto, chief of the Institute of Research, Washington, D.C., has been slow to recommend use of the spray on humans because it disappears slowly from a wound and needs strict supervision. It probably should be used only in life-or-death cases, he says.

Dr. Matsumoto reported work by U.S. Army researchers on tissue adhesive aerosol Cyano Acrylate spray, at the International Tissue Adhesive Conference in Vienna, Austria, Sept. 1.

Dr. Matsumoto is hopefully expecting clinical testing of the tissue adhesive. It will some day be a convenient way to stop bleeding from extensive liver and kidney wounds, for example, which are now difficult to handle.

IMMUNIZATION

Measles Vaccination in Five States

With the Governor of Illinois signing a law requiring the immunization of school children against measles, there are now five states cooperating with the U.S. Public Health Service's campaign to eliminate the disease.

Measles tends to be epidemic among children from late January through April. It is often serious because of complications including middle-ear infection and encephalitis.

The American Medical Association estimates that 150 children developed encephalitis and 250 died as a result of measles in the U.S. last year.

Among the vaccines now being used is a one-shot type trade-named Lirugen. It was developed by Dr. Anton J. F. Schwarz and called the Schwarz vaccine by the National Institutes of Health. Because it can be injected without a simultaneous shot of gamma globulin for protection, it is often preferred for mass inoculation clinics.

MORTALITY

Heart Disease Highest in Sweden

Thirty-six percent of all deaths in Sweden are caused by heart diseases, a recent World Health Organization survey shows.

Other major causes of death in that country are cancer, 19.1 percent, and stroke, 12.1 percent. Accidents and pneumonia both come in at 4.5 percent.

Percentage figures are more or less identical for all the Scandinavian countries. In the 23 industrial countries covered by the survey, however, traffic accidents are the principal cause of death for ages up to 45 years.

CANCER

Gallstones May Pave Way for Cancer

There are not a large number of gallbladder cancers but the death rate for those who have it is high, a Tulane University surgeon warns.

Dr. Martin S. Litwin, who studied the records of 78 patients with primary gallbladder cancer when he was at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, Boston, reports in the ARCHIVES OF SURGERY that all gallstone patients and any older person with any disease of the biliary tract should have operations.

Signs of this fast-moving cancer rarely occur until there is critical involvement of the common bile duct and nearby organs. Only 15 of the 78 patients had been correctly diagnosed although they had cancer. The malignancy was so far advanced in 39 of the group that it was useless to operate. In seven other cases, the cancer was found only at autopsy. Only two of the 78 cancer patients lived more than five years after surgery.

PHARMACOLOGY

Labeling Reinstates Measurin

The timed-release aspirin called Measurin, made by Chesbrough-Pond, in danger of forced withdrawal from the market by the Food and Drug Administration, has won a reprieve through revised labeling.

The FDA is dropping its proposal that the drug be withdrawn.

The new labeling does not claim that the pain relief is tied to the timed-release formulation. FDA has said there can be no valid claim that the product is more effective than an equivalent dosage of any other aspirin. The principal difference is in the convenience of the dosage.

Other long-lasting aspirin products affected by FDA's ban and in process of relabeling include Stendin tablets, manufactured by Abbott Laboratories, Relay tablets, made by Richardson-Merrell Inc., and Duramax tablets, made by Grove Laboratories.

DEMOGRAPHY

Upswing in Marriages

The United States and Canada both report increases in marriages during 1966, with the most pronounced rise occurring in the late months of the year. The upswing in both countries reflects the continuing increase in the number of persons reaching marriageable age, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company says.

The largest increase in marriages, 14.4 percent, occurred in Massachusetts. In Washington, Arizona and Utah the increases exceeded 10 percent. In three other states—Idaho, North Carolina and Nevada—the relative rise was at least twice the national average.

Although 10 states registered decreases in marriages between 1965 and 1966, all the declines were relatively small.