

medical sciences notes

THROMBOSIS

Task Force Makes Interim Report

Thrombosis has now emerged from its status as a part of heart disease and stroke, pulmonary embolism and other organ ailments, and is being studied as an important medical problem in itself.

The National Research Council's Task Force on Thrombosis, chaired by Dr. Sol Sherry of Washington University's School of Medicine, St. Louis, gave a preliminary report to an international conference on Nov. 30 at the National Academy of Sciences clarifying the image of the mysterious villain that leaves its calling card in the veins and arteries of most persons who die.

The Task Force held its first meeting in January 1966 and probably will continue for several more months to work out details of its final report. Although the conference decided to initiate three kinds of workshops for sharpening the focus of research on thrombosis, their organization remains to be worked out. The Task Force has obtained the cooperation of the National Heart Institute, which is in process of appointing an advisory committee on thrombosis. The new committee will take over the activities of the Committee on Thrombolytic Agents but will broaden its perspectives, defining significant problems of all types and instituting ways of solving them.

BLOOD THERAPY

Frozen Blood and Marrow Storage

Super-cold storage that would preserve a person's own blood and bone marrow until he needs it is predicted by a Chicago pathologist.

Dr. Israel Davidsohn of the Chicago Medical School and Mount Sinai Hospital Medical Center, Chicago, says the time may come when the first deposit of blood for a person's account in a long-term blood bank will be taken from the placenta before birth. One could begin making deposits in the bone marrow bank later in life to have his own marrow available in case he needed it for a bone transplant or to replace marrow damaged during heavy radiation therapy.

Dr. Davidsohn says that it may even be possible to grow marrow cells in a test tube although there are great difficulties in this today. He explains that the deep-freeze banks would end the problems of proper matching, sensitizing reactions and occasional hepatitis infections now encountered in transfusions.

The pathologist makes his predictions in the Dec. 4 issue of the *JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION*.

VACCINATION

Polio Cases Increase

Carelessness over vaccination is blamed for a rise in the number of polio cases in 1966. A total of 102 cases was reported in contrast to 61 in 1965.

Complacency about the threat of this crippling disease

has caused some people to neglect having children and babies vaccinated against it, Surgeon General William H. Stewart warns. A million fewer doses were used in 1966 than in 1965, and the 1965 figure was 77 million doses below that of 1964.

In contrast, immunizations against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis rose slightly in 1966. The largest increase has been scored against measles. So far in 1967 the number of cases of measles has dropped to one-third of that reported in 1966.

LACTATION

Breast Feeding Decline Spreads

Not only is breast feeding becoming more and more unpopular in such countries as the United States, England and France, it is going out of style in other parts of the world as well.

Dr. Niles Newton, assistant professor of psychology at Northwestern University Medical School, and her husband, Dr. Michael Newton, clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology, University of Chicago Medical School, attribute the decline to a wide variety of inter-related psychological factors.

An upper-middle-class group in Guatemala for example is reported to express "notions of modesty, distaste and boredom in regard to breast feeding."

Such notions can cause an insufficient milk supply, even if the mother nurses her baby.

Writing in the Nov. 30 issue of *THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE*, the Newtons draw on their own research and quote the findings of numerous other authorities.

They point out that the "survival of the human race, long before the concept of 'duty' evolved, depended upon the satisfactions gained from the two voluntary acts of reproduction"—intercourse and breast feeding. Aversions to breast feeding appear to be related to dislike of nudity and sexuality.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Dentists Take Throat Cultures

A cross-disciplinary attempt to prevent rheumatic fever is reported in the American Dental Association's December *JOURNAL*.

A closer professional relationship between dentists and physicians in the early detection and prevention of systemic diseases is seen in this project that took the form of a three-year study supported by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the U.S. Public Health Service.

Throat cultures were taken from 1,507 children by the dental staff of the Stickney Township Public Health District, a suburb of Chicago. The dentists found group A beta-hemolytic streptococci in the cultures of 213.

In one case the parents did not heed the dentist's advice to take their child to a physician for treatment, and the child developed acute rheumatic fever.

Dentists in many areas have notified physicians of suspected oral cancer discovered in mouth examination.

16 december 1967/vol. 92/science news/589