

medical sciences

INFECTIOUS MONONUCLEOSIS

Kissing disease occurs in children

An established 100,000 cases of infectious mononucleosis occur in the United States every year, a Yale professor reported to the meeting of the American Academy of Pediatrics in Chicago last week. Unreported cases among children would raise the total considerably.

Although much has been made of kissing as a means of transmission, Dr. Alfred S. Evans, professor of epidemiology, says this would be equally true in the spread of influenza and other respiratory infections. There are other mechanisms suspected, including toothpaste that has been contaminated by saliva from an infected person.

Among entering Yale freshmen, Dr. Evans reveals, at least 25 percent show the virus antibody in the blood that indicates mononucleosis infection in earlier years. Only six to seven percent give a history of known infection in the past.

Although adult cases show symptoms of sore throat and general discomfort, childhood cases are milder. Sore throat is less common; enlarged spleen and rash are likely to develop.

Dr. Evans also says that the disease appears in older people between 60 and 65 and is more severe with jaundice complications.

INFLUENZA

Hong Kong variety spreading

The Hong Kong strain of Asian flu (SN: 9/21, p. 284) is spreading surprisingly fast, doctors in the World Health Organization's Epidemiological Surveillance Unit say.

Among reports coming to WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, are these:

India's epidemic started in Madras following arrival of a ship from Singapore with 16 cases aboard.

Iran reports that an outbreak began last month in Teheran. Tests at the WHO center show the strains are antigenically close to the Hong Kong virus-variant.

Also close to the Hong Kong strain are flu viruses isolated in Manila. An epidemic there is subsiding, but cases in Luzon and Mindanao in the Philippines group are growing. The last severe epidemic in the Philippines was in 1957.

Australia has an epidemic in the Northern Territory, and again the new strain has been found responsible.

The National Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta, Ga., reports an outbreak of flu at the Marine Corps Drill Instructors' School in San Diego, Calif., with isolated viruses similar to the Hong Kong variety. Other scattered cases—in Atlanta; Washington, D.C.; Cleveland, Ohio and Princeton, N. J., are reported.

GASTROENTEROLOGY

Aspirin habit can cause ulcers

People who pop two to five aspirin tablets into their mouths every day to get a lift or settle the nerves are in danger of stomach ulcers, according to an Australian study.

Dr. Margaret Gillies of the gastroenterology department

of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, reports findings from a study of 100 ulcer sufferers, 48 women and 52 men.

Gastric ulcers are a common affliction in Sydney. About 10 percent of people who develop them have severe enough symptoms to warrant medical attention.

At the meeting of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians recently, Dr. Peter Baume of the Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney said that gastric ulcers are not associated with mental stress, although anxiety may produce duodenal ulcers.

Dr. Baume said antacid powders are useless as a cure for stomach ulcers. Research in his hospital has shown their only value to be in relieving pain. Different types of antacid powders were used in experiments in which they were given on the hour 14 hours a day without the slightest effect on healing.

COMPUTER MEDICINE

British doctors disagree

While the United States welcomes computer medicine, which can lessen the load on the private physician and spread the latest knowledge through public health programs, British reaction has been cautious.

With a comprehensive screening center to be opened in London next year, London's Harley Street, the last bastion of private medical practice in Britain, has erupted into hostility.

Harley Street survived the coming of the National Health Service and its decimation of private practice. The difficult diagnoses still fell to the clinical specialists. But a new anger has seized them as they foresee automated, multiphasic screening, which cheaply and quickly, its advocates claim, can pick up early signs of disease and prevent or overcome it.

It won't be cheap, some of the opponents claim. If every National Health patient were screened the cost would be an estimated \$1.2 billion a year.

Sir Max Rosenheim, president of the Royal College of Physicians, says detection for detection's sake is probably unjustified if no sound treatment is available. Also, unnecessary anxiety may be caused.

DRUG RESISTANCE

Resistant gonorrhea increases

Penicillin-resistant virus causing gonorrhea is coming into this country from Vietnam. Dr. Leslie C. Norins, director of the Venereal Disease Research Laboratory of the National Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta, says.

The highly resistant cases seen in troops in Vietnam, he says are the result of women turning themselves into "living culture tubes." He speculates that they are often taking bootleg penicillin, and as a result they become carriers only of those organisms that are penicillin resistant.

Dr. Norins says resistant gonococci are also being produced in the U.S., but not on the same scale. People are using left-over pills from previous infections for other aches and pains. If the users happen to be incubating gonorrhea, these low doses merely kill off the more susceptible organisms.

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