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MEDICINE

Donors' Ova Could Give Baby to Childless

► NEW HOPE is seen for childless couples by Dr. Howard W. Jones, obstetrician and gynecologist at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Md., and Dr. Robert Edwards of the Physiological Laboratory, Cambridge University, England, who have taken a basic step in normal egg fertilization in the laboratory.

This does not mean a test-tube baby is imminent. But it does mean that a healthy woman's ova might be fertilized in a test tube and then implanted in the womb of another woman without egg-producing ovaries. The donor ova could even be fertilized by the husband of the woman who receives the ova.

A report in the Medical World News, 7:41, 1966, cautioned that the work is in the early stages. The researchers are especially anxious that no abnormal children be produced.

• Science News, 89:162 March 12, 1966

OCEANOGRAPHY

Tiny Ocean Plant Foods Checked by Their Light

► VAST FIELDS of tiny ocean plants, potential food of the future, may be surveyed by a new method that checks the light they emit from their green molecules.

Like counts of corn or hay crops on land, the possibility of counting plant crops of the sea will be of increasing value for today's hungry and crowded world.

Scientists on a 21-day cruise off the coast of Baja California took samples of seawater as they sailed, reported Carl J. Lorenson of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, La Jolla, Calif. The scientists subjected these samples to blue fluorescent light and measured the light emitted from the green sea plants, he wrote in Deep Sea Research, February 1966.

The green pigment, chlorophyll, present in nearly all plants, acts like many other organic molecules and emits a light when subjected to electromagnetic radiation from an outside source.

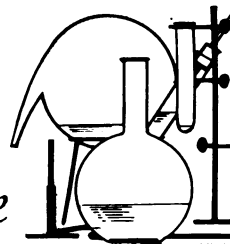
In this case, the plant plankton of the sea emitted their own light as the blue fluorescent light bathed the sea samples flowing through the meter instrument.

The scientists found a direct relationship between the light emitted and the amount of chlorophyll. This could be used to indicate the numbers of green plants, called phytoplankton, in areas of ocean under survey.

The chlorophyll in living plants is considerably less fluorescent, nine-tenths less, than that dissolved in laboratory test tubes. The sensitivity of the modified equipment used on the ocean cruise, however, is such that it can check chlorophyll in living plants over a range adequate for all open ocean studies.

• Science News, 89:162 March 12, 1966

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