

medical sciences notes

CANCER TEST

Early ovarian malignancy found

A method of obtaining ovarian cells for study could develop into an early warning system comparable to the Pap smear test for cervical cancer, research with 2,100 women indicates.

Although deaths due to ovarian cancer are estimated at 9,500 a year, the survival rate can be 90 percent if the malignancy is diagnosed early.

With an aspiration needle inserted harmlessly through the vaginal canal, Dr. Larry McGowan of Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia takes fluid from the cavity surrounding the ovaries and containing cells discarded from them, to find out whether a cancer is developing in the reproductive organs.

Dr. McGowan's method is similar to that developed by Dr. John B. Graham, chief cancer research gynecologist at the Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo. Dr. Graham has found malignant cells in 22 patients. When removed, the ovaries of two of these patients were found to have invasive cancers, and those of the other 20 had malignant cells on the surface of the ovaries.

MEDICAL WORLD NEWS of June 7 reports the tests.

EDUCATION

Meharry Medical College seeks \$50 million

A predominantly Negro institution in Nashville, Tenn., which has graduated more than 50 percent of the Negro physicians and dentists in the United States, will start a \$50 million development campaign in September.

Dr. Lloyd C. Elam, newly-inaugurated president of Meharry Medical College, says the campaign aims at comprehensive community medicine as well as at research, new buildings and educational programs.

Already the college has three community health programs either operating or being planned, which reach a combined low-income population in Nashville of 142,000.

The school expects to raise funds from Government and foundation grants, business and industry and through individual and alumni gifts.

POISONINGS

2,100 fatal accidents

Of the nearly one million persons who accidentally swallow poisonous materials annually in the United States, about 2,100 die and many more are left with permanent injuries, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company reports.

Since 1963, the death rate from such poisoning has remained at nearly 11 per million population, which is 16 percent higher than in 1960.

At the preschool ages, fatal poisoning has decreased markedly in recent years, but the danger of poisoning continues greater among very young children than at any other period. The 1965 mortality from this cause was 50.3 per million among boys at one year of age and 36.3 among girls.

Both barbiturates and nonbarbiturate drugs show an uptrend in fatal poisoning, but deaths from ingestion of

wood, denatured and other alcohol has dropped sharply.

A recent study of death certificates showed 54 deaths in 1964 due to the combined effects of alcohol and barbiturates, and 29 deaths that same year attributed to the combined effects of alcohol and nonbarbiturate drugs.

VACCINATION

Cholera, plague and typhus in some areas

Recommendations for vaccination of travelers against three internationally important diseases—cholera, plague and typhus—have been released by the U.S. Public Health Service.

In addition to South and Southeast Asia, cholera has also been epidemic in parts of the Middle East.

Plague immunization is advised for persons traveling to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, and for all persons whose work brings them into regular contact with wild rodents in plague-infested areas of the western United States, South America, Africa or Asia. All laboratory personnel working with the plague organism or with rodents infected with plague should be vaccinated.

Vaccination for typhus is not required for international travel, but it may be advisable for travelers to remote highlands of Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Mexico, Ecuador, Bolivia or Peru, and mountainous areas of Asia. It is suggested for high-risk groups such as scientific investigators, oil field and construction workers and others in close contact with diseased areas.

INFLUENZA

Shift in virus slight

Except for the military formula for flu vaccine, no change is planned in either the bivalent or polyvalent vaccine formulas for use in the 1968-69 season, the Public Health Service says.

The new military formula, substituting the Asian A-2 Ann Arbor strain of July 1967 for the A-2 Taiwan strain of 1964, was recommended on evidence that the current strain reacted poorly with antisera using A-2 strains isolated in 1966 and earlier.

The World Health Organization headquarters in Geneva announces that although slight shifts in influenza virus strains have appeared in this past season's worldwide outbreaks, evidence thus far indicates that the shifts are insufficient to compel the United Nations agency doctors to change next year's reagents.

In an earlier report, WHO doctors said, "There is still a fair degree of cross reaction between the Tokyo strain and former A-2 viruses, and it may be important for the preparation of the next set of WHO reagents."

PHOTOTHERAPY

Therapy for the premature

The exposure of premature infants to light may be a method of preventing an excess of the red bile pigment bilirubin in their blood, according to Drs. Ivan Diamond of Harvard Medical School, Jerold Lucey of the University of Vermont and Rudi Schmid of the University of California.