

MEDICINE

Smoking, Not the Nicotine, Raises Blood Pressure

Tests on Ten Normal Men Show Same Results Whether Cigaretts Were Made of Tobacco or of Corn-silk

IT'S the smoking, not the nicotine, that raises the blood pressure of cigaret smokers, Dr. Willis F. Evans and Dr. Harold J. Stewart, of the New York Hospital, have discovered.

Their findings, which seem to have smoked out the "Demon Nicotine" myth of the old anti-cigaret propaganda, were reported to the American Society for Clinical Investigation in Atlantic City.

Tests were made on 10 normal men who smoked different types of cigarets. In all except four instances there was a moderate decrease in the amount of blood allotted to the tiny blood vessels near the surface of the body, a rise in blood pressure, faster heart beat and chilling of fingers, toes and body surface. But these changes were of essentially the same magnitude and lasted as long regardless of whether the men smoked regular cigarets, commercial denicotinized cigarets, fully denicotinized cigarets, corn-silk cigarets or smoked cigarets through a water pipe.

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German Measles Serious

GERMAN measles, which some of its victims may now be calling Nazi measles, is a far more serious disease than has been supposed, Dr. Mark P. Schultz, of the U. S. Public Health Service, declared.

An attack of German measles can bring on rheumatic fever and heart disease, he reported.

First knowledge that this supposedly harmless childhood ailment could be a serious disease comes from England, where it has caused trouble in the Army, leaving its victims with rheumatic heart disease or arthritis. The English medical opinion is that the virus which causes German measles may have changed its character.

Most cases of rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease are started by hemolytic streptococcus germs. Some cases, however, are started by a variety of other things, and one of these may be German measles, Dr. Schultz said.

Among 50 Washington, D. C., school children who had German measles during a serious epidemic there last year, three were left with rheumatic heart disease, Dr. Schultz reported.

When rheumatic fever follows German measles in young adults, it affects the joints chiefly. In children the heart is attacked.

Every effort should be made, in view of these new findings, Dr. Schultz emphasized, to prevent the spread of German measles by quarantining those who have it or may be coming down with it because they have been in contact with a patient. This may interfere with troop movements and has therefore been hotly debated in England, but Dr. Schultz believes the quarantine worth trying.

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Sulfa Drug Proved Harmful In Nasal Injections

EVIDENCE that sodium sulfathiazole, recently advanced as the long hoped-for beneficial treatment of sinus trouble, actually is dangerous is reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (May 2).

A series of rabbits were given nasal injections of 5% solution of the sodium sulfathiazole by Dr. Charles E. Futch, Dr. Lloyd K. Rosenfold and Dr. Charles E. Stewart, Jr., of Los Angeles. They found serious damage to the animals' mucous membranes, the tissues that line the inside of the nose. After a week's rest from the nasal injections, "there was little recovery from the destructive process," they report. The 5% solution had been recommended as a nasal spray for human sinus infection.

The three physicians found the 5% solution and a 30% solution both highly alkaline, and suggest this may be a factor in causing the damage to the nasal mucous membrane. They express the hope that chemical combinations of the sulfa drugs which are non-irritant may be developed.

They warn, however, that chronic sinus trouble is too complex a disease to be cured with a single medicine.

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Deaths with Sulfathiazole

DEATH of four persons receiving sulfathiazole and extensive damage to their internal organs from the drug also is reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (May 2).

From their studies of the four fatal cases, Dr. Max Lederer and Dr. Philip Rosenblatt of Brooklyn suggest how this valuable drug may be used more safely.

They warn against indiscriminate and uncontrolled use, and suggest examination of the urine during treatment for crystals and blood. A chill followed by sustained fever is a signal to discontinue the drug at once.

"Sulfathiazole," they conclude, "should be used only when definitely indicated and should not be continued longer than is absolutely necessary."

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ANTHROPOLOGY

Japan Was Once Ruled By Line of Women

JAPAN, where women are very decidedly "kept in their place" in modern times, was once ruled by women. The time was so near the dawn of history that definite written records are very scanty, but very early sources, part of them Chinese, tell of a great Queen Wo, who was succeeded by other female rulers, all of them marrying their own brothers and handing down the scepter from mother to daughter.

This is among the little known facts about the origins of Japan revealed by Carl Whiting Bishop, Smithsonian Institution archaeologist.

So powerful was the influence of the Japanese queens, and so firm the tradition of female dominance, that early Chinese records refer to Japan as "the Queen Country." Subsequently, however, their power was weakened and they were relegated to a religious position as high priestesses of the Sun Cult, while real power in the land was held by the founders of the line of the Mikados—who in their turn, centuries later, were likewise thrust aside by an ambitious oligarchy of aristocrats.

Earliest inhabitants of the Japanese islands, Mr. Bishop states, were the Ainu, a very primitive race with light skins and wavy hair, sometimes though probably erroneously referred to as Asiatic