

MEDICINE

ACTH against TB

Advanced TB patients show amazing response to treatment with ACTH; however, the patients relapsed when ACTH was stopped. Its use in TB treatment is a big question.

► ACTH, wonder drug for arthritis, produces amazing results in tuberculosis as well.

Four patients were practically hopelessly sick with advanced TB. Tuberculous ulcers on the larynx, or voice box, made it impossible for them to talk except in a hoarse, queer whisper.

ACTH was given to them. Within six to eight hours they started getting better. Fever disappeared completely. Appetite and strength and ability to speak improved markedly. Within 24 hours the doctors could see improvement in the ulcers on the larynx.

But the patients were not cured. As in arthritis, they relapsed when the ACTH was stopped. And one of the patients died.

"At this moment no one can say whether the three surviving patients are better off than they would have been without ACTH," declared Dr. Ralph Tompsett of Cornell Medical College and New York Hospital in reporting the four cases at the meeting in Atlantic City, N. J., of the American Society for Clinical Investigation.

One of the patients was given streptomycin after the ACTH was stopped. Progress in this patient was just what would have been expected without the ACTH.

The most that can be said for ACTH in tuberculosis at present was summed up by Dr. Tompsett as follows:

"If one could develop means of maintaining the benefits that are immediately obtained, at least the patients would feel better while they are getting over their disease."

Dr. Tompsett does not consider ACTH or cortisone, which was tried in one case, as even treatment for tuberculosis, much less cure.

TB patients might be better off without the potent hormone. What the drug does is, in general terms, to cancel the body's reaction to the tuberculosis infection. That, Dr. Tompsett pointed out, may not be good. The fever, the formation of tough fibrous tissue in the lungs, and other body responses to the infection may be a good thing.

Pondering this question of whether ACTH is making things better or worse for the patient is keeping the doctor awake nights, he hinted. While this question remains unanswered, only hopelessly sick patients are likely to get any of the hormone.

X-ray pictures of the patients' lungs look "different" after ACTH, but the changes are not very marked, and the doctors do not know yet what they mean.

Working with Dr. Tompsett on the stud-

ies reported were Drs. Charles LeMaistre, Carl Muschenheim and Walsh McDermott. Previously, studies of ACTH in tuberculosis had been made by Drs. Smith Freeman, Jennings Fershing, C. C. Wang and L. C. Smith of the Veterans Administration's Hines Hospital and Northwestern University Medical School, Chicago.

From these studies and others of the drug in pneumonia and infantile paralysis, it appears that ACTH is giving doctors a new tool for learning more about germ-caused diseases and possibly for forging new weapons against them.

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METEOROLOGY

Melting Popsicle Weather For Popsicle Season

► THE nation's weather in May will be somewhat like a melting popsicle—warm on the sides, cooler in the middle—according to the U.S. Weather Bureau's 30-day extended forecast.

Temperatures averaging warmer than the seasonal normal were predicted east of the

Appalachians and also along the Pacific coast. But the central portions of the country will be cooler than normal.

Coolest weather is expected in the Northern Plains states and western lake region. That is the area where melting snows and heavy precipitation in rain or snow have produced flood or near-flood conditions, particularly in North Dakota's Red River Basin.

The Weather Bureau's forecast indicated the north-central portion of the country will get at least as much rainfall as the seasonal normals for the month of May.

In that area, normal means between 1.5 and 3 inches of rain for the 30 days, Jerome Namias, chief of the extended forecast section said.

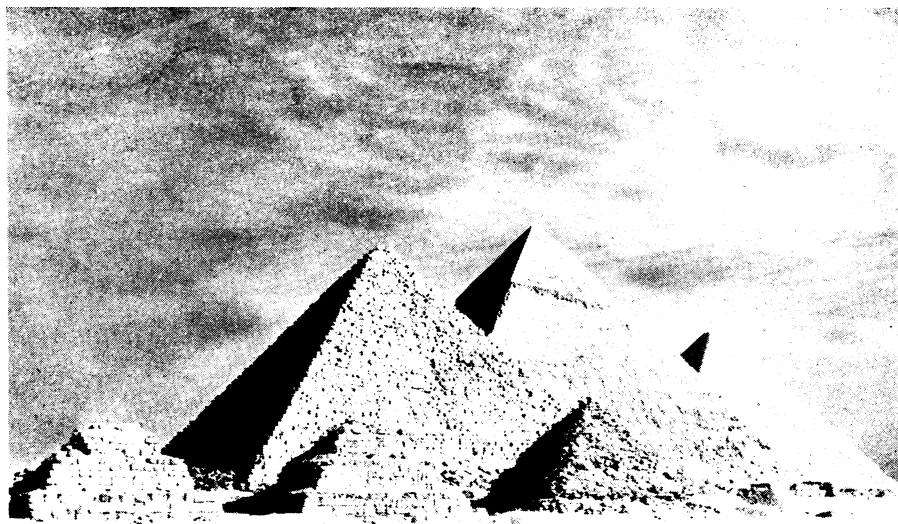
If the rainfall in May is distributed evenly, it would not make the present flood situation more critical, said James S. Sweet of the Weather Bureau's rivers division. He estimated that a solid inch of rain over a wide area in a 24-hour period would be needed to make the rivers keep on rising, producing new floods.

Worried farmers in the dry dust bowl area of the 1930's could draw hope from the 30-day forecast for May. It predicted frequent and abundant showers over a wide belt extending from Texas and Colorado eastward through the southern plains, Ohio Valley, middle Atlantic states and New England.

Subnormal rainfall is expected in the Pacific coast states and in Florida.

Elsewhere, amounts equal to or greater than normal are expected.

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CHIPS OFF THE OLD BLOCK—There are many more than the three Great Pyramids as the above photo shows. All are over 5,000 years old and were the tombs of ancient Pharaohs. The big pyramid in the background are (left to right) Mycerinus, Chephren and Cheops (largest—451 feet).