

MEDICINE

Ileitis Often Recurs

► THE CHANCES for recurrence of regional ileitis after operation for it range from 30 in 100 to 70 in 100.

These percentages of recurrence after operation were reported at the American Medical Association meeting in Chicago by a group of surgeons from the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Medicine and Graduate Hospital, Philadelphia.

Dr. Isador Ravdin, University of Pennsylvania surgeon called in consultation on President Eisenhower's case, is with the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, a different part of the University.

At the Graduate School of Medicine, the recurrence rate after operation is 55% in patients followed for two to ten years. The experiences reported by other surgeons, the Pennsylvania doctors said, range from 30% to 70% recurrence.

The immediate results of operation for the condition are "excellent," the doctors said. If there is a return of the trouble, the patient may be operated on again, if there are the same complications that called for the first operation.

These Graduate School surgeons prefer an operation in which the inflamed, swollen-shut section of intestine, or ileum, is cut out. The by-pass operation performed on President Eisenhower is preferred by some other surgeons, and may have been selected because of the President's age.

The immediate results and chances for recurrence are the same for both operations.

The surgeons who gave the report in an unusually timely exhibit are Drs. Herbert R. Hawthorne, Alfred S. Frobese, Paul Nemir Jr. and Robert B. Laucks.

The tranquilizing drugs may in the future be used in medical treatment of the condition, Dr. Frobese said when interviewed by SCIENCE SERVICE. So far he has not heard of their being used. Anti-spasmodic drugs such as belladonna have been used, as well as diet in medical management of the condition.

The speed with which the diagnosis was made in the President's case and the fact that it was made before the operation surprised many doctors at the Chicago AMA meeting. It is attributed to the fact that the President's physician, Maj. Gen. Howard McC. Snyder, recognized that previous attacks of digestive upsets, as they were formerly reported to the press, were attacks of regional ileitis.

The condition has been increasing in recent years. When first reported in 1932, only 14 cases were known. In the past two years, there have been reports of 1,500 to 2,000 cases, Dr. Frobese estimated. The increase is considered real. Older surgeons say they saw no cases of it 20 years ago.

Science News Letter, June 23, 1956

MEDICINE

Poison Ivy Vaccine

► A NEW KIND of vaccination against poison ivy may come from Hawaii and the Orient. If so, it will follow the principle successfully used in the oldest vaccination procedure, that against smallpox.

Protection against smallpox is given by vaccinating with the virus of the related disease, cowpox.

For poison ivy in the United States, the new idea is to try vaccinating with extracts from mango and lacquer plants of Hawaii and the Orient. These plants are related to our poison ivy, poison oak and sumac.

This idea, with tests to back it up, was presented at the American Medical Association meeting in Chicago by Dr. Earl R. Clairborne, 3275th U.S.A.F. Hospital, Parks Air Force Base, Calif., and Dr. Ervin Epstein of Oakland, Calif.

Persons born in the Orient or Hawaii, they found, are much less susceptible to poison oak than persons born in America. The doctors believe this may be due to natural immunity to the poisons built up by early exposure to the mango and lacquer plants.

In the study, almost 900 Caucasians, Negroes, Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos and Hawaiians took poison oak patch tests. In the American-born groups, reactions devel-

oped as follows: Caucasians, 58%; Negroes, 43.5%; Chinese, 45.5%; Japanese, 26%; Filipinos, 26%; and Hawaiians, 46.8%.

None of the Chinese born in China reacted. Other groups born outside the United States reacted as follows: Japanese, 3.3%; Filipinos, 6.6%; and Hawaiians, 5.77%.

So far, extracts of American plants have not been able to prevent poisoning, but the doctors suggest the stronger Oriental plants might provide extracts that would immunize susceptible persons against our native plants.

Science News Letter, June 23, 1956

ENTOMOLOGY

Measure Mosquito Rate of Digestion

► A MOSQUITO takes from one to two days to digest blood.

The length of time will determine how soon it bites again, and, therefore, how effective the mosquito is as a disease spreader.

A scientist at the University of Sydney, Australia, A. K. O'Gower, measured the digestion rates of five species of female mosquitoes and learned that some kinds digest blood faster than others. Rates vary from

31 to 48 hours, the biologist reports in the *Australian Journal of Biological Sciences* (Feb.).

In at least one species, *Aedes notoscriptus*, the digestion rate speeds up as the number of hours of darkness increases.

Previous experiments by other scientists show that mosquito digestion gets faster as temperatures rise. It also speeds up at low temperatures as the humidity rises.

Science News Letter, June 23, 1956

Magnesium is the lightest commercially-available metal.

About 95% of all married men under age 65 are gainfully employed.

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

VOL. 69 JUNE 23, 1956 NO. 25

The Weekly Summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 1719 N St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C., NORTH 7-2255. Edited by WATSON DAVIS.

Subscription rates: 1 yr., \$5.50; 2 yrs., \$10.00; 3 yrs., \$14.50; single copy, 15 cents, more than six months old, 25 cents. No charge for foreign postage.

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Printed in U. S. A. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Washington, D. C., under the act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of postage provided for by Sec. 34.40, P. L. and R., 1948 Edition, paragraph (d) (act of February 28, 1925; 39 U. S. Code 283) authorized February 28, 1950. Established in mimeographed form March 13, 1922. Title registered as trademark, U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Abridged Guide, and the Engineering Index.

Member Audit Bureau of Circulation, Advertising Representatives: Howland and Howland, Inc., 1 E. 54th St., New York 22, Eldorado 5-5666, and 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Superior 7-6048.

SCIENCE SERVICE

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