

MEDICINE

In Two Days Boy Learns Use of Artificial Arm

➤ A TWO-YEAR-OLD boy with one arm missing below the elbow learned how to use an artificial limb within two days, Dr. Claude N. Lambert, professor of orthopedic surgery at the University of Illinois College of Medicine, Chicago, reported to the International College of Surgeons meeting in Mexico City.

"We have recently made him an attachment so that the hook can be removed and a baseball glove attached to enable him to play baseball with his brothers," the surgeon reported.

Dr. Lambert described the work of an amputee clinic that has been maintained at the University since 1952. Before that time, nothing had been done for juvenile amputees in the way of supplying them with artificial limbs, and the clinic members had no idea of how young a child could successfully use the devices, he said.

"We started off at age five but rapidly lowered the age. Up to the present time, we have fitted a six-months-old baby with a functioning below elbow prosthesis (artificial substitute) with a hook as a terminal device. We feel that certainly ages one to two are adequate for a below elbow type of prosthesis," Dr. Lambert reported.

Whenever possible, children should be supplied with an artificial limb and trained adequately to use it at least one year prior to school age, he advised.

The two-year-old amputee has used his artificial arm constantly and his disability has been totally accepted by both his immediate family and playmates without any "psychological interference," Dr. Lambert reported.

Science News Letter, March 9, 1957

MEDICINE

Cause of Epilepsy Suggested by Research

➤ BLOCKAGE of blood to a seahorse-shaped part of the brain known as the hippocampus may produce some cases of epilepsy.

This has been determined in research by

Dr. John Green and associates of the anatomy department at the University of California at Los Angeles Medical School, Los Angeles. The findings were reported at the recent Marseilles, France, meeting on temporal lobe lesions.

In studies of experimentally-induced epilepsy in animals, it was found that seizures in a large number of cases seemed to originate in discharges from the hippocampus.

Pathological examination of the animals revealed damage to this brain area that was similar to that found in human epileptics. The damage was of a nature that suggested an interruption of the blood supply.

"It has long been known," Dr. Green points out, "that the hippocampus has a precarious blood supply and is easily damaged by deficiency of oxygen content in the blood, carbon monoxide and various poisons. Blood vessels supplying this brain area pass through a narrow fissure with rigid boundaries.

"It is easy to imagine compression of vessels in the fissure," he says. "This may occur during birth or head injuries. Temporary denial of the blood supply to the hippocampus produces changes which may cause epilepsy much later."

Science News Letter, March 9, 1957

Questions

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BIOPHYSICS—What will soon aid the early detection and correction of "old age" diseases? p. 149.

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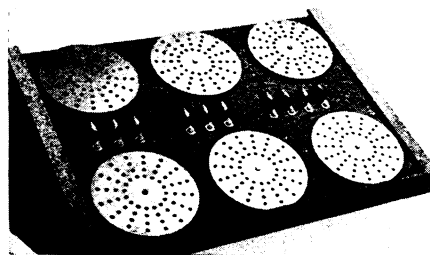
MEDICINE—How does stopping hearts save lives? p. 154.

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