

PATHOLOGY

Contraceptives Increase Cancers in Rats

➤ A HINT that contraceptive drugs could be involved in the production of cancer in women was included in a study of contraceptive drugs in rats, reported by Dr. Cornelia Hoch-Ligeti, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, to the American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists meeting in Washington.

Rats treated with two commercially available contraceptive drugs and kept on a low protein diet developed an abnormal number of tumors, while others who were treated with the drugs and fed adequate diets showed no appreciable increase in tumors, Dr. Hoch-Ligeti reported.

Not all the difference could be accounted for by the low protein diet alone. Animals fed low protein diets but not treated with contraceptives developed only about half as many tumors as those who were treated with the drugs.

The large number and unusual locations of the tumors, two of which were in the brain, makes it unlikely that the results were due to chance, she reported.

How closely these findings are related to cervical cancer in women cannot be answered at present and the substance in the contraceptive that is responsible is not known, she added.

One ingredient, called 8-ortho hydroxyquinoline, is already under independent investigation, Dr. Hoch-Ligeti said.

A search is being made for factors that might be involved in cervical cancer, and the experiments were done on the theory that chemicals which kill one kind of cell might affect the normal pattern of other cells, she explained.

Science News Letter, May 18, 1957

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