

SURGERY

Much Surgery Needless

➤ A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT of needless surgery is being performed on gastric ulcer cases because of the fear of malignancy, a group of West Coast doctors has found.

The fear of malignancy in gastric ulcer cases that do not seem to respond to therapy immediately, plus the inability of radiologists to differentiate between benign and malignant ulcers, has resulted in the needless removal of stomachs.

Many of these patients, had they been given a strict therapeutic routine, could have avoided surgery, said the doctors, all from the Veterans Administration Center, University of Southern California.

A nine-year study of serious gastric ulcers, those that previously would not heal or were found to recur, has led the doctors to favor their therapeutic treatment instead of immediate surgery.

The management of gastric ulcers by the California investigators included thorough diagnostic measures. This meant X-ray determination of the type of ulcer, if possible. This was followed by an internal examination of the stomach and diagnosis of cells shed from the diseased area of the stomach. Biopsy, gastric analysis, complete diagnostic work-up and strict therapeutic routine followed.

ANTHROPOLOGY

Bird Cry Sets Calendar

➤ SOME of the native calendars of mountainous northern Luzon in the Philippines are regulated by neither the sun nor the moon, but by certain recurring events of nature.

To this day, the hard-working farmers of Bontoc are able to inspire the envy of their neighbors by stuffing their granaries full of rice procured through setting their calendars to the cry of a baby bird, Dr. William Henry Scott, Farmingdale anthropologist, reports in the *American Anthropologist* (June).

One should start to sow, these people believe, when the baby killing bird can only chirp "ki-ik." When it has developed its full-throated "kiling," transplanting should begin. On this bird-directed schedule, the rice will flourish when the mountain streams are swollen and be ready for harvest before the water courses dry up again.

The Igorots do not count the passage of time at all, or at least nothing in their native language indicates they do. They do not reckon their own ages or know how many years ago a specific thing happened.

They do not even use ordinal numbers to indicate the order in which events took place. Parents speak of an eldest or youngest child but not of a third or a fourth, and there are parents who do not even recall which of their children was born first.

In the Mountain Province, the year is

divided into 12 seasons, but a month is not considered as a certain number of days. It is a new or full moon that occurs during a certain season. Do-ok is the name of a month in Besao, but in Sagada it is simply the time of the year when food is scarce, water low and dysentery rife.

Sagada is a village about 3,000 feet higher than Bontoc. The people there cannot depend on the migration of birds for their calendar since they must plant a month or so before the birds come.

They watch the sun's distance from the celestial equator and start sowing when the sun rises in line with two certain rocks projecting from the tops of the adjoining hills.

In surrounding villages lower than Sagada, they do not bother to listen for the birds or watch the sun, they just keep an eye on when the Sagada people plant.

Science News Letter, June 14, 1958

MEDICINE

Improve Gout Treatment By Switch to Intravenous

➤ A SWITCH in the method of administering an anti-gout drug has eliminated one of the big headaches facing many gout patients.

Colchicine, a well-known fighter of gouty arthritis, has long been known to relieve

the severe pain accompanying this disease. Many patients, however, after taking colchicine orally, experience gastrointestinal upset and pain almost as severe as the gout symptoms themselves.

Patients who suffered gastrointestinal pain when given oral doses of the drug were switched to intravenous administration with an intravenous preparation of colchicine.

The results showed that the switch produced relief of the acute gouty attack more promptly and considerably reduced the gastrointestinal upset, Drs. J. E. Seegmiller, K. Lemone Yielding and Leonard Laster, Arthritis and Rheumatism Branch of the National Institute of Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases, Bethesda, Md., have reported.

Science News Letter, June 14, 1958

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

VOL. 73 JUNE 14, 1958 NO. 24

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; ten or more copies in one package to one address, 7½ cents per copy per week; single copy, 15 cents, more than six months old, 25 cents. No charge for foreign postage.

Change of address: Three weeks notice is required. When ordering a change please state exactly how magazine is now addressed. Your new address should include postal zone number if you have one.

Copyright © 1958 by Science Service, Inc. Reproduction of any portion of SCIENCE NEWS LETTER is strictly prohibited. Newspapers, magazines and other publications are invited to avail themselves of the numerous syndicated services issued by Science Service. Science Service also publishes CHEMISTRY (nine times a year) and THINGS of Science (monthly).

Printed in U.S.A. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Washington, D. C., under the act of March 3, 1897. 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 mimeograph 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.



SCIENCE SERVICE

The Institution for the Popularization of Science organized 1921 as a non-profit corporation.

Board of Trustees—Nominated by the American Association for the Advancement of Science: William W. Rubey, U. S. Geological Survey; Wallace R. Brode, National Bureau of Standards; Douglas Whitaker, Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Nominated by the National Academy of Sciences: Edward U. Condon, Washington University; Harlow Shapley, Harvard College Observatory; Philip Bard, Johns Hopkins University. Nominated by the National Research Council: I. I. Rabi, Columbia University; Leonard Carmichael, Smithsonian Institution; John R. Dunning, Columbia University. Nominated by the Journalistic Profession: O. W. Riegel, Washington and Lee University; Michael A. Gorman, Flint Journal; Lee Hills, Detroit Free Press. Nominated by the Scripps Estate: Edward J. Meehan, Memphis Press-Scimitar; Frank Ford, Washington, D. C.; Charles E. Scripps, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Officers — President: Leonard Carmichael; Vice President and Chairman of Executive Committee: Charles E. Scripps; Treasurer: Wallace R. Brode; Secretary: Watson Davis.

Staff — Director: Watson Davis. News Editor: Howard Simons. Writers: Marjorie Van de Water, Ann Ewing, Jane Marye, David Pursglove, Benita Tall. Science Youth Division: Harold A. Edgerton, Joseph H. Kraus, Margaret E. Patterson. Photography: Fremont Davis. Production: Priscilla Howe, Marcia Nelson. Syndicate Sales: Hallie Jenkins. Interlingua Division in New York: Alexander Gode, 80 E. 11th St., GRamercy 3-5410. Advertising Manager: Fred A. Moulton, MEtropolitan 8-2562.