

MEDICINE

Eating While Drinking Reduces Pancreatitis

AMERICAN and Canadian alcoholics frequently develop pancreatitis while European alcoholics seldom do.

Possibly this is due to the fact that the European usually eats while drinking. The American gulps his drink straight or at least sips without food, Drs. Thomas T. White, Lloyd M. Nyhus and Donal F. Magee of the University of Washington School of Medicine explained to colleagues who visited their exhibit at the American College of Surgeons meeting in Atlantic City, N. J.

Other eating habits that appear to affect the development of this painful disorder include a sudden switch from a light diet to a heavy meal. For instance, they explained, an elderly person, whose normal diet consists of tea and biscuits, will often develop pancreatitis after eating a heavy meal on a holiday or family visit.

The much studied Bantu of Africa, who suffers from protein deficiency, will also develop pancreatitis and liver disease.

To return to the American, however, chronic pancreatitis is often found in the alcoholic. A special exhibit and explanation of this particular type of disorder was offered to the visiting surgeons by Drs. John M. Howard and Edward W. Ehrlich of Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital of Philadelphia.

Among 58 patients who had developed pancreatic calcification, 86% were alcoholics. Discovery of calcification in the pancreas should be the tip-off to the surgeon that the patient's pancreatic troubles are due to alcoholism, Dr. Howard explained.

Thus, the surgeon can avoid disappointing and ill-advised surgery, a common mistake when the trouble is diagnosed as gallstone pancreatitis. Otherwise, surgery that is not specifically for pancreatitis caused by heavy drinking will result in overwhelming failure and pain will return to the patient. Among 21 patients so operated upon, pain returned to 19.

Science News Letter, October 10, 1959

OCEANOGRAPHY

Russian Instrument Measures Salinity

AN INSTRUMENT for measuring simultaneously the salinity, temperature and depth of sea water has been described by a Russian scientist.

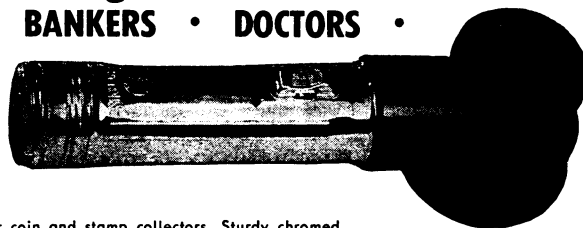
Known as the bathythermosalinograph, the apparatus is accurate within one-hundredth of a degree centigrade for temperature and one-hundredth of a percent for salinity.

The instrument was used for observations at 18 stations during a recent expedition in antarctic waters of the Pacific. As a result of the expedition, G. Khundzhua of Moscow University told the International Oceanographic Congress meeting in New York, continuous records of depth, temperature and salinity were obtained in the upper 200-yard layer of the ocean area.

The apparatus also has proved highly effective in recording turbulent fluctuations with sharp salinity changes.

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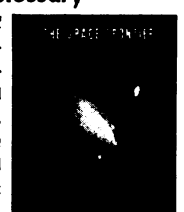
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