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MEDICINE

Drugs Could Eliminate TB

THE DRUGS medical science now uses to fight tuberculosis are capable of completely eliminating that disease in this country.

This fact is at the core of a plan to speed up the campaign against tuberculosis announced by Dr. H. McLeod Riggins, president of the National Tuberculosis Association and clinical professor of medicine at Columbia University.

Essentially, the plan is to use available antituberculosis drugs to eliminate all sources of tuberculous infection by adequate treatment of every person with active tuberculosis, and also selected persons with inactive disease.

Dr. Riggins called for an active campaign to locate every person with active tuberculosis and insure his treatment with a drug

or combination of drugs known to be effective against this communicable disease. Thus, since the disease is spread from person to person, the chain of infection will be broken and eventually tuberculosis can be eliminated.

The NTA estimates there are at least 250,000 active cases of tuberculosis in the U. S. today. Of these, 100,000 are not known to health departments. An additional 550,000 Americans are believed to carry the disease in an inactive form.

Drugs now used to fight tuberculosis include isoniazid, streptomycin and PAS, p-aminosalicylic acid.

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EDUCATION

Schools Must Stop "Talent Waste"

THE "TREMENDOUS WASTE of talent" in our schools must be eliminated, said Dr. Edwin D. Harrison, president of Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Ga. Dr. Harrison stated that a considerable number of students who are capable of handling college work do not go to college, and some do not even finish high school. Yet colleges sometimes "welcome with open arms" many students who graduate in the bottom fourth of their high school classes. Within ten years, every major college will have to limit admissions to those students who are competent, Dr. Harrison said.

Science News Letter, March 12, 1960

DENTISTRY

Mouth Cancer Detectable By Painless Method

MOUTH CANCER, which accounts for five percent of all cancers, can now be detected and diagnosed in its early stages by a simple and painless test.

Dentists of the Veterans Administration Hospital in Brooklyn, N. Y., recently completed a three-year trial in which the test proved to be highly efficient. The technique involves taking a smear or scraping from the mouth for microscopic examination, Dr. Henry C. Sandler, the hospital's chief of dental service, said.

The older test method is biopsy, or removal and laboratory examination of a small slice of tissue. The newer scraping method is just as accurate in testing for cancer, and often reveals the presence of cancer cells when the first biopsy does not.

Dentists can use the smear technique on a wide-scale basis to check on harmless appearing lesions of the mouth and for patients who object to biopsy. However, if cancer is indicated, the doctor may make several biopsies to confirm the diagnosis.

A cooperative study to determine the extent of the technique's usefulness has been begun by dentists at 12 VA stations.

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