

MEDICINE

Pets Get Owners' TB

► **HOUSEHOLD PETS** carry a risk of getting tuberculosis if their owners have TB, a Scottish physician reported.

The question of whether the pet more often infects the human or the human the pet has not been answered. The probability is that the human more often infects the pet, Dr. V. M. Hawthorne, assistant medical director, Glasgow Mass Radiography Service, said.

Among 31 dogs that died of tuberculosis, Dr. Hawthorne found 16 had owners infected with TB. In five cases, the disease was traced to neighbors, and in two cases to a former owner.

Among 13 apparently healthy dogs in contact with tuberculosis, eight had a positive reaction to BCG, the weakened strain of bovine tubercle bacilli frequently used as a vaccine. BCG was used instead of the tuberculin skin test because the latter is not a satisfactory method of testing cats and dogs. Three of nine cats similarly tested showed a positive reaction to the BCG.

The risk from the tuberculous pet differs little from that of the tuberculous human, although further investigation is needed, Dr. Hawthorne told the National Tuberculosis Association and its medical section, the American Thoracic Society, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

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Drug for Fungus Disease

► **A NEW ANTIBIOTIC** for treating lung diseases caused by a fungus has been developed.

Tried on a small number of patients, the drug proved particularly effective in treating histoplasmosis, a disease native to the Mississippi and Ohio River Valley areas. Some 30,000,000 persons are believed infected with the causative agent.

Dr. John B. Utz of the Infectious Disease Service, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Md., reported that four of five patients with disseminated histoplasmosis, usually fatal, recovered. The fifth received the drug for too short a period to evaluate its effectiveness, he reported at the meeting of the National Tuberculosis Association and its medical section, the American Thoracic Society, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dr. Utz, in charge of the drug's clinical trials, also reported improvement in patients with chronic histoplasmosis, lung cavities and blastomycosis. Human patients with coccidioidomycosis, or San Joaquin Valley fever, a disease caused by infection of the lungs, did not respond. But results were promising in animals with experimental coccidioidomycosis, indicating that procedural changes may improve results in man, Dr. Utz said.

The drug, not officially named, is tentatively tabbed X-5079C. Derived from a new species of *Streptomyces*, it was discovered during a routine sampling of soil

for antibiotics. It is administered by skin injections. Amphotericin B, the only other available drug for treating fungus diseases, is injected into the vein.

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TB Control Threatened

► **WARNINGS** against the dangers of overconfidence about wiping out tuberculosis were sounded at the annual meeting of the National Tuberculosis Association in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dr. Walsh McDermott of New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, New York, said man has made extraordinary progress in increasing knowledge of disease prevention and treatment, but has not been successful in convincing his fellow man to take advantage of available methods of dealing with infectious disease.

Good drugs are at hand today for tuberculosis treatment, he said, but the question is how to get the patient and the drug together. He said volunteer tuberculosis workers, working with health agency representatives, can aid in locating patients. Once the patient is found, "the community must insist that adequate chemotherapy is available to him."

Dr. McDermott sees a setback in the gains made to eradicate tuberculosis in human beings unless the obligation to treat all patients with active tuberculosis is met.

Drug therapy should be made available to those deemed in danger of relapse, he said.

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Tuberculosis in Cattle

Dr. W. W. Armistead, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University, East Lansing, termed the campaign against tuberculosis in cattle, begun in 1917, a "success story." But he pointed out that the number of tuberculin test reactors among cattle has increased during the past few years, establishing that "eradication of a widespread infectious disease becomes more difficult in the final stages." Public complacency, he said, is "a growing obstacle as an eradication campaign proceeds."

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TB Germ Foils Cancer

► **PARTS OF** the tuberculosis germ have produced immunity to some types of cancer as well as to tuberculosis when given to laboratory animals, Dr. David W. Weiss of the University of California, Berkeley, reported to the National Tuberculosis Association and its medical section, the American Thoracic Society, meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio.

BCG, the strain of weakened live tubercle bacilli used as a vaccine, and several non-toxic fractions of the bacillus that increase resistance to tuberculous infections in animals, are active against a variety of bacterial infections and against several types of malignant tumors, Dr. Weiss said.

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RIDE ON AIR—A stretcher-carrier, developed by Folland Aircraft, Southampton, England, gives a joltfree ride to patients. The vehicle is supported by a chamber of air cushions.