

Common Cold Progress

➤ THERE IS ENCOURAGING NEWS about man's fight against the common cold and, even more important, the RS often fatal respiratory infection that now kills thousands of little children.

RS virus, the culprit in fatal respiratory infections of little babies, will soon be attacked by a vaccine, when and if a program urged by the Journal of the American Medical Association 176:647, 1961, gets underway. RS stands for respiratory syncytial.

The AMA editorial states that vaccines are urgently required against viruses like RS "because of the need to modify the serious consequences of primary infection in infancy and childhood."

The disease-producing organism was first recognized as a human virus in 1956 by a group working with Dr. Robert M. Chanock of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Chanock and his associates have since then recovered 56 strains of RS virus from 346 infants and children treated at Children's Hospital, Washington, D. C., for respiratory ills from March through July, 1960. They found only four strains of RS virus among 272 children who did not have respiratory ailments.

The investigators say the presence of RS antibodies in adults would make it difficult to raise the level of protection in this age group against the illness because a vaccine could not be expected to increase their antibodies. But this is not true of infants and children.

Working with Dr. Chanock at the National Institutes of Health were Dr. Karl M. Johnson and Christine Cumming, R.N., and Drs. Hyun Wha Kim, Andrew J. Vargosko, Robert H. Parrott, with Ann Deleva, Research Foundation, Children's Hospital.

• Science News Letter, 79:367 June 10, 1961

Hysterectomy Before 50

➤ TOO MANY surgeons fail to ask "Is this operation necessary?" when taking out the uterus and especially the ovaries, a Buffalo obstetrician and gynecologist told the International College of Surgeons in Chicago.

Dr. Clyde L. Randall said that although the majority of benign tumors develop in younger women, eight among nine malignancies of the ovary develop after the patient's 50th year.

"If uterine and ovarian removal are to be advised on the basis that frequently fatal malignancies can thus be prevented," Dr. Randall said, the undesirable effects of such surgery can "probably be minimized by reserving this recommendation and the performance of this surgery until the climacteric years (currently nearer 50 than 45)."

The risk of preserving the ovary in the face of the fact that nine out of 1,000 women in the State of New York alone are now developing malignancy of this

organ was pointed out, but its function both before and after menopause was emphasized.

Hardening of the arteries and high blood pressure were mentioned as occurring more frequently among women whose ovaries had been removed, thus depriving them of hormones believed to protect them from vascular change.

The removal of the uterus alone in younger women, Dr. Randall said, does not appear to be followed by hypertension.

With 40 out of each 1,000 women apparently destined for some form of uterine cancer, early detection of malignancy and surgical removal of the uterus is saving many lives, the speaker indicated. But the removal of a normal ovary in a young woman on the chance that it might some day become cancerous seems unjustified.

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Science Club Workshops

➤ WHEN DOZENS of science club officers and sponsors spend a day together in a Science Clubs of America Workshop, ideas, arguments, questions, and reports of successes and failures are poured into the common pot to brew a potent tonic.

One of these SCIENCE SERVICE conferences was held at Seattle University on Saturday, May 20, for Washington State clubs affiliated with Science Clubs of America. Club sponsors and one officer from each club were invited to attend and to bring in ideas and problems to exchange with other participants.

In April a Science Youth Activities Conference was held at Roanoke College, Salem, Va., for some 80 educators, science fair

directors and scientists. Club activities, the Junior Academy of Science, science fairs, science education and the national and state Science Talent Search were discussed.

The University of New Mexico in Albuquerque was host to another workshop in November. This one included both adult and student groups and was attended by school superintendents, science supervisors, principals, teachers, club sponsors and science club officers. Panels and informal discussions covered opportunities and programs offered to science-oriented students.

The response to such work sessions has inspired some of the participants to set up similar sessions in their own localities.

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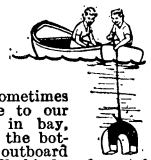
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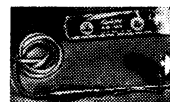
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