

MEDICINE

Lung Transplants Hopeful As Cancer Treatment

► LOOKING TOWARD the time when a human lung can be replaced by transplantation, Dr. David A. Blumenstock of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, reported in Philadelphia that his study of 55 pairs of animal lung transplants looks promising.

Rise of lung cancer, attributed to smoking by some studies, has aroused quickened interest in eventual success in replacement of human defective lungs.

Age of the dogs whose lungs were transplanted did not appear to influence the results, an opposite discovery from previously reported studies of fetal tissue grafts and transplants.

At five months, Dr. Blumenstock said, a lung removed and replaced in the same animal was found to be almost normal. Others have reported survival and function of transplants in the same animal (auto-transplants) for as long as two years, he added.

Rejection of transplants from other animals continues to occur, although the use of irradiation and drugs prolongs the survival.

Another speaker at the tenth symposium of Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital in Philadelphia was Dr. Robert R. Kohn of Western Reserve University, Cleveland, who reported on changes in connective tissue.

Collagen, a protein substance in connective tissue, is distributed throughout the lung in high concentration. All evidence indicates that it becomes increasingly altered by age.

Dr. Leon Cander, head of the section of chest diseases at Hahnemann, told the symposium that the lung is perhaps the most perfect organ in which to study the aging process.

Physicians still do not know if aging is genetically determined or if it results from a succession of such "minor insults" as cigarette smoking, air pollution and other environmental factors.

An increase in emphysema and tuberculosis appears to occur in the aging population, Dr. Cander said.

• Science News Letter, 84:367 Dec. 7, 1963

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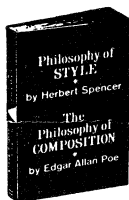
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