

MEDICINE

Diet, Rest Important For High Blood Pressure Patients

Such Individuals Should Avoid Overeating, to Prevent Stoppage in Hardened Arteries; Surgery for Some Cases

WHEELED in on a stretcher, a coal-grimed janitor suffering from apoplexy appeared before a clinic of the American College of Physicians meeting and helped his physician emphasize facts about high blood pressure.

The moral of the janitor, said Dr. O. H. Perry Pepper of Philadelphia, is that certain people are better off with high blood pressure than when it drops to a lower and more normal level.

You could see the coal-grime stains on the janitor's hands as Dr. Pepper held up his arms to show the arteries. A week before, the physician explained, the janitor had dropped to the floor while shoveling coal, stricken with apoplexy. For ten years insurance medical examiners had noted a high blood pressure in the janitor. Yet when he was brought to the hospital his blood pressure was down to a low level. Nevertheless he was suffering.

Persons of the janitor's type, as far as their blood pressure is concerned, may actually be safer if the blood pressure is kept from dropping to lower levels.

"Be brave," said Dr. Pepper to his colleagues, when patients of this type are encountered, and try to raise the blood pressure when it is low, providing it is known or suspected that such patients normally are among the high blood pressure group.

Care Advised

The lesson Dr. Pepper gave was that the person with high blood pressure should be kept from getting tired out physically, should be protected from nervous or emotional shock, from worry, should go to bed and take care of himself for every illness, even a cold. Any of these conditions, worry, shock, infection, prolonged physical exertion, lower the blood pressure in normal persons, and in those with habitual high blood pressure, the drop may be dangerous.

Another thing for the person with habitual high blood pressure to guard against is overeating. Dr. Pepper said the older doctors who diagnosed as

acute indigestion the condition now diagnosed as a certain form of heart attack—coronary thrombosis is the technical term—were probably right. The person with habitual high blood pressure generally has hardened arteries; "rusty pipes," Dr. Pepper called them. If he "makes a pig of himself" by overeating, he gets a drop in blood pressure, meaning that the blood isn't pumped at a high enough pressure to circulate through the arteries. Then a stoppage or thrombosis occurs in "that artery best prepared by the rust for the plumbing to stop."

Another new technique which doctors now use to combat high blood pressure that cannot be reduced by medical means is to operate on certain nerve paths to the brain. Dr. Max Peet of the University of Michigan described the operation. He was talking about patients differing from the janitor example of Dr. Pepper.

Improvement in such patients, following the operation, is most striking, said Dr. Peet, although with scientific caution he pointed out that it had only been used for the last two years.

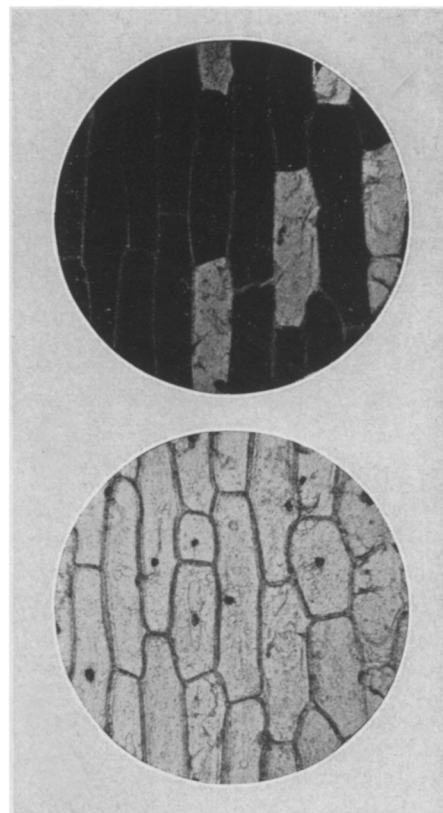
Over a third of the 130 patients operated on by his method so far are now back home living normal lives, going about their business, untroubled by the high blood pressure, kidney disorder or eye disturbances which had been among the features of their gravely sick state before the operation. Only 7 per cent. of the cases showed no improvement after the operation and 4 per cent. failed to survive it.

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BIOLOGY

Over 10,000 Sterilization Operations in California

OVER 10,000 human sterilization operations—10,801, to be exact—have been performed in accordance with the California state sterilization law, E. S. Gosney, president of the Human Betterment Foundation, announced after compiling the 1935 figures.



THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

Above: cells of living onion epidermis under ultraviolet radiation absorb all of it and show up black in the photograph; the few white cells are dead ones. Below: after being killed with heat, all cells show up white.

These operations, Mr. Gosney pointed out, were performed on inmates of state institutions since 1909.

Science News Letter, March 21, 1936

BIOLOGY

Dead Plant Cells Show up White Under Ultraviolet

WHITE as death" takes on new meaning, in experiments with plant cells and ultraviolet rays performed by Dr. B. Luyet of St. Louis University and his collaborator P. M. Gehenio of the Biodynamica Laboratory, St. Louis, Mo. They found that when the outer skin cells of an onion pass from life to death their absorption for the ultraviolet rays is lost. Living cells are black in an ultraviolet photograph; dead cells come out white.

Transparency to ultraviolet rays is now used by the St. Louis investigators as a method of diagnosis of death in their further study of the physico-chemical structure of living and dead matter.

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