

MEDICINE—DENTISTRY

# Vitamin C Is Suggested As Treatment For Pyorrhea

## Link Between Gum Disease and Scurvy Revealed When Symptoms Are Found Correlated With Blood Content

**A** LINK between pyorrhea and scurvy has been forged at the laboratories of the Harvard Dental School. Drs. Paul Boyle and David Weisberger have under way research which indicates that a lack of vitamin C in the diet may be the cause of—or at least a contributing factor to—pyorrhea just as this vitamin C has long been known to cause scurvy.

While the findings are yet incomplete they indicate, say the scientists, that as far as the general practitioner is concerned vitamin C treatment for pyorrhea “can be adopted with safety and it probably should be adopted as a routine measure in addition to, but not in place of, other recognized forms of therapy.”

The Harvard dentists have been working with both animals and humans in their studies. Guinea pigs were fed diets varying in their vitamin C content and later checked to see the degree of pyorrhea which they developed. X-ray and microscopic examinations of these animals showed all the characteristics of true pyorrhea in reproducible form.

Forty-eight human patients were studied in the dental school where their degree of pyorrhea symptoms were compared with the content of vitamin C in their blood. Twenty-three patients with a low vitamin C blood content had marked evidences of the disease. Ten patients with a reduced vitamin C blood content showed the gum disease but to a lesser extent than the first group. Among fifteen patients with normal vitamin C blood content only one case had the disease.

### Not Conclusive

These human findings, it is emphasized, are not conclusive but they do offer a most consistently positive finding in cases of the advanced disease, Dr. Weisberger indicated.

To the layman and the average dental practitioner the research has three significant points: (1) The new test of vitamin C in the blood as employed is not practical for a dental office and will probably largely be confined to hospi-

tals. (2) The suggested use of vitamin C is a relatively safe procedure, for most experts agree the body can handle an overdose easily. This is not true with vitamin D. (3) The improvement in the mouth tissues around the teeth, which occurs when vitamin C is administered, indicates the practical value of the treatment.

Vitamin C, found naturally in limes and lemons principally, is also available in tablet form as ascorbic acid or cevitamic acid. To maintain the normal amount of vitamin C in the blood a daily intake of 50 milligrams is sufficient. The suggested dose for treating pyorrhea is a gram in five or six days, or about 150 to 200 milligrams daily.

*Science News Letter, August 14, 1937*

ETHNOLOGY

# Chinese Civilization Is Not So Ancient As Once Thought

**S**OME people have claimed that the famed and ancient civilization of China grew and flourished in the isolation that occidental travelers knew when they first went there in comparatively recent times. Others hold that China's civilization and its arts were lifted “ready made” from the Near East civilization of Babylonia and Egypt.

Neither theory has any basis of fact, declared Carl Whiting Bishop of the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., in an address before the University of Michigan Institute of Far Eastern Studies.

New knowledge of the last few years is upsetting some long favored conceptions of China and its cultural rise. For one thing Chinese civilization is not one of the oldest in the world, as popularly supposed.

What China truly can claim, said Mr. Bishop, is a longer continuous history than most nations have, which helps lend an air of antiquity really unpossessed.



**LARGEST CHROME-ALUM CRYSTAL?**

*This huge chrome-alum crystal, 18 inches high and weighing 50 pounds was “grown” from a perfect microscopically-selected “seed” during the past three and one-half years by Stanley A. Phillips, of the University of Illinois, who holds another chrome-alum crystal only six weeks old.*

Actually Babylonia and Egypt were flourishing thousands of years before China. But China has changed so slowly that it has retained, almost into present times, some characteristics which have disappeared from other nations long ago. This, again, lends an air of antiquity to probing modern men.

The early origins of China's civilization, said Mr. Bishop, appear to have arisen in the basin of the great Yellow River, making it another one of the well-known “river-valley civilizations” like those along the Nile, the Indus and Euphrates.

When Babylonia and Egypt had advanced well on the way to organized civilization the Chinese dwelt in a state of barbarism only a little more advanced than those of the American Indians on the Atlantic seaboard at the time of the landing of Columbus, declared Mr. Bishop.

One fact indicating that Chinese civilization was probably not of independent, isolated origin is that few, if any, of the