



TRACING HER ANCESTRY

The stuffed figure of Su-Lin, giant panda, looks on as Paul McGrew shows Henry W. Nichols, chief curator of geology at Field Museum of National History, a fragment of a fossil animal's jaw bone and teeth which he discovered in Nebraska. The fossil is believed to be a 20,000,000-year-old ancestor of Su-Lin.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Preventing Tooth Decay Is the Job of the Patient

Public Health Association Hears Reports of Fight Against Venereal Diseases; State Has Birth Control

EACH person who wants to keep his teeth from decaying must do the job himself. He cannot depend on his dentist for this, Dr. Nina Simmonds, nutrition authority of the University of California's School of Dentistry, declared at the meeting of the American Public Health Association in Kansas City.

Eat just as few sweets as you can and get as many vitamins, especially the sunshine-vitamin D, as possible. This sums up the rest of Dr. Simmonds' practical advice to those who want to avoid tooth decay or caries, and explains why the job of caries prevention is so largely an individual one. If it is to be done by eating the right foods, or not eating the wrong ones, obviously each person must do it for himself, and parents must do it for their children.

The role of cleanliness in caries prevention Dr. Simmonds dismissed by saying that "the use of the tooth brush in personal hygiene is an accepted practice." She also pointed out that many

members of primitive races and also numerous persons living under civilized conditions often escape tooth decay even though their mouths and teeth are not kept clean. Observations have shown, however, that these persons also do not eat sweets, and when they change their diet they are likely to get decayed teeth.

Cutting down on sweets, Dr. Simmonds explained, cuts down the number of acid-forming germs in the mouth. It is the acid formed by these germs that destroys the enamel of the teeth and gives caries its start. She cited many experiments by different scientists which all showed a relation between sweet foods and caries. Other factors enter into the situation, but the dietary one seems to be most important.

The cause of tooth decay is "an exceedingly complex problem," Dr. Simmonds pointed out, but she believes that further research will solve this problem as it has such others as rickets, scurvy, beri-beri and pellagra.

Sources of Syphilis

ERADICATION of syphilis in the nation can be hastened by locating and examining contacts of known syphilis patients, it appears from the report of Drs. T. B. Turner of the Rockefeller Foundation, A. Gelperin of the Cincinnati Health Department, and J. R. Enright of Hawaii's bureau of venereal disease.

Working in the syphilis department of the Johns Hopkins Medical School and Hospital, these investigators found that for every 100 patients coming for treatment, 30 more infectious syphilis patients could be located by contact investigation. If these patients had not been discovered and treated, not only would their health have suffered but they would probably have spread the infection still further.

It cost \$10 to bring in for medical care each previously unrecognized case of syphilis, and about \$18 for each infectious case. The results achieved were, in the opinion of Dr. Turner and associates, well worth the cost.

Second Venereal Disease

AN attack on gonorrhea similar to the nation-wide fight to wipe out syphilis should be started at once, said Dr. Walter Clarke, executive director of the American Social Hygiene Association.

Gonorrhea, like syphilis, is an ailment that formerly was not mentioned in polite society. Like syphilis, it causes a vast amount of suffering, disability and childlessness. It is even more common than syphilis. Dr. Clarke said that gonorrhea is more prevalent than any ailment except the common cold.

Three potent weapons for fighting gonorrhea have recently been developed and because these weapons exist, Dr. Clarke believes the time has come to start serious plans for a public health attack on this disease.

One of the weapons is a female sex hormone which, he declared, cures gonorrhea in little girls in 63 per cent. of the cases in 150 days. The efficacy of this treatment was discovered by Dr. Robert Lewis of Yale.

Second weapon against the disease is the modern counterpart of the sweat house treatment used by the Indians when they first contracted gonorrhea from white people.

Modern physicians use malaria, radiant heat, and high-frequency radio waves to produce high fever to cure gonorrhea. Many investigators have devised

various methods of inducing fever. One of the most scientific, Dr. Clarke said, is that in which tests are made to determine how long it takes to kill the germs in each case at a temperature of 106.7 degrees Fahrenheit. The patient is then given fever treatment for the time indicated as necessary to kill his particular germs.

Third weapon against gonorrhea is sulfanilamide, the new chemical remedy which is conquering a great number of other infectious ailments. For best results with this treatment, the patients should be in bed in the hospital. Under these conditions, over three-fourths of acute cases and almost 100 per cent. of the chronic cases have been apparently cured. Results when the patients are not in bed are not so good. Only about one-half the patients were cured under these circumstances.

Dogs Are Fever Drag Nets

Dogs probably play a more important part in spreading deadly Rocky Mountain spotted fever than is generally recognized. Dr. Carl F. Jordan of the Iowa State Department of Health reported that dogs were implicated as having spread the ailment in over one-third of the cases recently reported in Iowa.

The germ or virus of the disease is carried in the bodies of ticks, but dogs carry the ticks, Dr. Jordan pointed out.

"Dogs serve as a drag net in gathering ticks from surrounding territory and bringing them close to children and adults in the home," Dr. Jordan said. "As an example, in an Indian home in which two children developed spotted fever, ticks numbering 275 were taken from four dogs belonging to the family."

Dogs themselves are susceptible to the virus or germ of the disease, recent experiments show.

Persons who live in or frequent rural areas, Dr. Jordan warned, should be "tick conscious" during the tick season.

Sickness Among Children

MORE than 100,000 cases of disabling illness occurred in one year among a little over half a million of the nation's children, George St. J. Perrott and Dorothy F. Holland of the U. S. Public Health Service reported.

These figures, obtained in the National Health Survey, show that the sickness rate among children under 15 years is 32 per cent. higher than the sickness rate for all ages.

Four out of every five disabling illnesses among children under 15 years of

age were included in the group of acute infectious diseases and respiratory diseases. Of the acute infectious diseases, measles, chicken-pox, whooping cough, mumps, and scarlet fever were most frequently reported. Tonsillitis, influenza, colds, pneumonia and bronchitis, in that order, were the most frequent respiratory diseases.

Malaria takes its toll of child health in the South, accounting for four-fifths of all disabling illness among children under 15 years due to the infectious and parasitic diseases.

Both high and low income families failed in a large number of cases to call a doctor when a child had one of the acute infectious or respiratory illnesses, except tonsillitis and pneumonia. Upper income families, when they did call a doctor, however, provided more intensive medical care for all diseases of childhood than the families in low income groups who had medical attention for sick children.

Children in small cities received less medical care for their illnesses than those in large metropolitan centers. In the South, sick negro children received notably less medical care than sick white children.

Parents need to be educated to the importance of medical care of children, the federal health workers concluded from the survey.

Whooping Cough Vaccine

VACCINATION against whooping cough, dangerous as well as trying childhood disease, got a good rating in a report by Dr. Pearl Kendrick of the Michigan State Department of Health and Dr. Anthony K. Borowski of Mount Clemens, Mich.

The number of cases that developed in 1,815 vaccinated children was 52, whereas, there were 348 cases among 2,397 unvaccinated children. When vaccinated children did get whooping cough they had less severe attacks than the unvaccinated children.

Birth Control Program

NORTH Carolina is the first state in the nation to have a birth control program sponsored by the state health department. The success of the program during its first 18 months of existence was reported by Dr. J. W. R. Norton of the state board of health.

Nearly half the counties of the state now have birth control clinics, Dr. Norton reported. There has been no local

opposition to the service or the method adopted for rendering it. Social, religious and other civic leaders have given their full endorsement and cooperation.

The patients have been selected from poor married women who need to limit the size of their families or space their children for the sake of their own and the children's health. Women who are able to pay a private physician are encouraged to do so. Practising physicians in the communities served have been glad to find that they may legally give this service to their private patients.

A total of 1,141 patients has been served, with only 6 failures reported. In three of these the mentality of the woman was very low.

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PHYSICS

Earth's Magnetism Is Still Mystery

THE MYSTERY of magnetism has been puzzling the best minds of the world ever since that unrecorded day when man first picked up a natural lodestone and found that it strangely attracted bits of iron to it.

For thousands of years only a curiosity, the lodestone was finally discovered—probably in China—to have the additional power of indicating north if it was suspended on a string. The earth itself was later found to be a giant magnet.

Through the ages man's uses of magnetism have increased to all the ramifications which make possible today's present electrical era; for magnetism and electricity were found to be closely related. But ever the mystery of the potent power of earth magnetism was present, and only partially explained.

Seeking some answer to the riddle scientists, the world over, have probed deeper and deeper into matter and into smaller and smaller chunks of matter

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