

MEDICINE

# Cancer Victory Nearer

Important atomic advances such as increased destruction following injection of radioactive colloidal gold may benefit stricken patients in the future.

► VICTORY over cancer seems nearer in view of advances reported by Atomic Energy Commissioner Lewis L. Strauss to a Senate appropriations subcommittee.

Cancer patients, however, should be warned not to expect immediate benefits from these advances. They are important steps along the road to victory but there are still many obstacles to overcome.

One advance involves the injection of radioactive colloidal gold, from the atomic pile at Oak Ridge, directly into cancers. This brings cancer-destroying beta rays from millions of point sources, instead of from six or eight, into play on the cancer. It means increased cancer destruction with less damage to surrounding healthy tissue. Dr. Paul F. Hahn of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, who developed this method of cancer treat-

ment, is as enthusiastic as any true scientist allows himself to be in the first stages of a new development. But he does not say he has a cancer "cure." More time must elapse before that can be determined.

Still far from application in cancer treatment but impressive in its possibilities is the second advance reported by Commissioner Strauss. This consists in successfully getting a cancer-destroying radioactive chemical to go directly to the part of the body desired, without any dangerous stops in healthy tissue. The success has been achieved in the case of one organ, the kidney, and so far applies only to rats, mice and rabbits. The chemical used is radioactive iodine. It is done by a kind of vaccination procedure. Advantage is taken of the fact that an ani-

mal will make antibodies to tissues of another species of animal when these get into the first animal's body. The antibodies are specific. If they are, for example, anti-rat kidney, they will go straight to the rat's kidney when injected into a rat. When mixed with radioactive iodine, they take this chemical along with them. The hope now is that the technic can be applied to directing radioactive chemicals to cancers in the human body. The work leading to this advance was done by Drs. David Pressman and Geoffrey Keighley of California Institute of Technology, now at Memorial Hospital's Sloan Kettering Institute in New York.

*Science News Letter, June 26, 1948*

MEDICINE

## New Drug Under Trial As Possible TB Remedy

► TRIAL of a new drug as a possible remedy for tuberculosis is getting under way, Dr. Alfred Burger of the University of Virginia announced at the first national medicinal chemistry symposium sponsored by the American Chemical Society in Ann Arbor, Mich.

The drug is a Japanese cousin of quinine, called cepharanthine. Several drugs derived from quinine have been studied for possible use in tuberculosis but only cepharanthine has shown any promise, Dr. Burger said.

It was first isolated in Japan shortly before the war. It is now available in this country but since the studies have "barely started," no conclusions about its effectiveness can be drawn as yet.

*Science News Letter, June 26, 1948*

MEDICINE

## Lung Peeling Operation Helps Some TB Patients

► NEW wrinkle in TB treatment is a lung peeling operation, reported by Dr. Paul V. O'Rourke of Detroit at the meeting of the National Tuberculosis Association in New York.

The operation consists in removing part or all of a membrane over the lung. Technically it is known as decortication, meaning literally the removal of the bark.

The peeling is done only when the lung is in a collapsed state. It is done to let the collapsed lung reexpand in cases where this is desired. An abnormally thickened membrane over the lung interferes with its reexpansion.

*Science News Letter, June 26, 1948*



**DISEASE-CAUSING FUNGI**—A complete laboratory is contained in this wall cabinet designed to provide doctors with a means of growing and identifying fungi as part of their office procedure in diagnosing ringworm, athlete's foot and other common fungus growths. It was designed by Dr. J. Walter Wilson, clinical professor of dermatology, University of Southern California Medical School, and Dr. Orda A. Plunkett, associate professor of botany, University of California, Los Angeles.