

MEDICINE

High Blood Pressure Aids

New drug from ergot helps to reduce blood pressure. Another effective aid is a nerve-cutting operation for patients with heart failure complications.

➤ A NEW drug for treating high blood pressure which looks "promising" in preliminary trials was announced at the Interamerican Cardiological Congress in Chicago.

The drug is called dihydroergocornine. It comes from ergot, drug long used to check hemorrhage in childbirth. Preliminary trials of it in patients with high blood pressure were reported by Drs. Ralph M. Tandowsky and Fred V. Cerini of Los Angeles.

Its action is based on functional blockage of sympathetic nerve impulses to the very smallest arteries. It is given daily by injection into a vein until the ideal blood pressure for the patient is reached. If results prove satisfactory it is then given in a liquid to be swallowed each day to keep the blood pressure at the desired level.

The new drug is not considered a cure for high blood pressure. The Los Angeles doctors call it a valuable aid in relieving the condition. It must be given with caution as it tends to be cumulative and this frequently agitates

the patients with high blood pressure.

A nerve-cutting operation to reduce high blood pressure may, contrary to previous medical opinion, be helpful in patients whose high blood pressure is complicated by heart failure.

Definite improvement for a long period has been obtained in eight of 11 such patients operated on, Drs. Ignacio Chavez and Luis Mendez of Mexico reported.

Heretofore heart disease and especially heart failure have been considered definite signs against the operation, though patients with this complication are precisely the ones who most urgently need lowering of the blood pressure, the Mexican physicians pointed out.

When medical treatment failed, they were forced to operate on such patients, some of them in extreme heart failure.

The improvement in the eight patients who survived the operation has lasted from one to two and a half years without further sign of heart failure. Some of them have resumed normal life.

Science News Letter, June 26, 1948

ENGINEERING

Saving Cost in Houses

➤ Suggested methods for designing small houses to have adequate strength without the use of more material than necessary are described in a new bulletin of the National Bureau of Standards. The objective is to cut building costs.

This report was prepared as a result of extensive studies and tests made by Bureau staff members who approached the problem with the same type of engineering principles as are employed in designing bridges. Copies are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office.

Saving costs through saving material and labor should result from the study. Strength to withstand snow, wind, impact and other loads, both on the exterior and the interior, is a first consideration. Application of engineering principles to the design of houses presents a complete and logical method for

determining allowable loads for walls, partitions, floors and roofs. The Bureau engineers followed the procedure of applying loads to specimens that accurately reproduce the most important structural parts of a house.

This approach permits the use of unconventional materials and unusual methods of construction. It determines the suitability for use of the many new types of building materials recently developed and available in panels or other forms for ready use in buildings.

Strength of houses in the past has been made adequate by patterning them after others that have stood the test of service conditions. They often have far greater strength, and include far more material, than is necessary. Present structures follow closely the traditional methods handed down from medieval England. From these traditions and building practices, building codes have been

formed that stand in the way of what might be modern construction.

This engineering approach to strength of houses will, the Bureau believes, open the way for designers to introduce unconventional materials and unusual methods of fabrication through laboratory tests to determine whether the constructions possess adequate strength. The Bureau believes also that the method will shorten the time required to develop new houses and reduce construction costs.

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An American company is planning to build *motorized rickshaws* for China.

Boys incur 15% more *surgical operations* than girls, a study of 100,000 surgical cases shows.

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