

Nader's group attacks medical professions

WASHINGTON AP—A study group sponsored by Ralph Nader said Sunday that the U.S. medical profession does not merit the trust placed in it, primarily because patients cannot be reasonably sure of receiving competent care.

The study group, composed of a former federal health official and students from law and medicine, proposed that the federal government take over the setting of standards for medical care in hospitals and doctors' offices.

"Although the world's best medical care has always been practiced in the United States, the almost complete lack of internal quality control within the medical profession has also allowed a large measure of very poor medicine to be practiced," the report said.

"Every citizen is at the mercy of a system devoid of uniform, enforced standard of quality and must run the risks implied in the statistics of uneven levels of care

among hospitals and physicians."

The report criticized the federal government, state medical societies and licensing officials and national organizations like the American Medical Association and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals. It accused them of recognizing "a developing crisis in our health care system" but failing to take rapid action or proposing ineffective measures.

The AMA issued a statement defending its record, saying: "We are working almost continually with the Congress and the executive branch of the federal government to promote quality and cost controls."

"The report appears to be comprehensive and deserving of the objective consideration which we will give it," said the AMA. "On a hasty perusal, some of its recommendations appear to have merit while others raise questions."

The study group was headed by Dr. Robert McCleery, a diplomate of the American Board of Surgery and former deputy director of the Food and Drug Administration's bureau of medicine. McCleery, 57, has also been in private practice and has served on the staff of congressional committees.

The report noted that medical care is one area where people cannot judge for themselves the quality of the service they receive. For this reason, the medical profession has a unique responsibility to make sure that the system is monitored to weed out poor quality care. Monitoring is poor, if it exists at all, the report concluded.

Photos of Britisher released by FLQ

MONTREAL AP—Canadian newspapers published Sunday four different photographs that appeared to be of kidnapped British Trade Commissioner James Cross who is being held hostage by terrorists, a cell of the Quebec Liberation Front.

The pictures, sent out by the Front, known as the FLQ for the initials of its name in French, apparently meant to show that Cross, 59, who was kidnapped Oct. 5, is alive and well.

Quebec's labor minister, Pierre Laporte, was kidnapped by FLQ terrorists Oct. 10 and strangled a week later. A 19-year old student, Bernard Lortie, was arrested by police Friday and told a coroner's inquest that he and three other FLQ members abducted Laporte from his home. Lortie said, however, that he had left the hideout house in suburban St. Hubert the day before the labor minister was killed.

One of the photos purportedly of Cross was received along with a note by the newspaper Journal de Montreal. Contents of the note were not revealed by either the newspaper or authorities.

The Associated Press in New York also received a photo and communicate through the mails Saturday. The statement gave no information about Cross but said the FLQ was "determined to carry out a revolution." The two other pictures were received Wednesday and Saturday by the weekly Quebec Presse.

Two of the pictures showed the man believed to be Cross sitting on a box playing cards, in a third the subject is reading a newspaper and in the fourth he is looking directly at the camera. A message on the back of one of the photos said the box in which Cross was sitting contained dynamite.

News Roundup

from AP reports

WASHINGTON—Sen. Edmund Muskie, D-Maine, said Sunday that "in a tentative, limited way" he has started to sound out Democratic leaders as to the chances of their supporting him as the party's 1962 presidential candidate. But Muskie, who was re-elected last Tuesday to a third term as Maine's senator, said that "effort obviously has to be expanded and escalated" if he does make up his mind to run for president. Muskie declined to name the persons he has contacted and said it has been "too limited" a list. "To reveal it would misrepresent the nature of my interests and my drive in this connection," he said.

JERUSALEM—Israel's Cabinet met in regular session Sunday and reportedly discussed the possibilities of rejoining United Nations peace talks with Egypt and Jordan. Authoritative sources said Premier Golda Meir and her ministers considered conditions under which Israel might return to the talks, but no concrete proposals were raised.

DETROIT—The answer to whether the United Auto Workers' eight-week-old strike against General Motors will end shortly or continue possibly beyond Christmas is likely to come within the next 48 hours. GM Vice President Earl Bramblett said Oct. 27 that unless settlement were reached within two weeks it would be impossible for GM to return to full production in November. That two weeks will be up Tuesday.

MOSCOW—Communist China, in anniversary greetings published here Sunday declared that "fundamental questions" with the Soviet Union should not hinder the growth of "normal" relations between the two governments. A telegram printed in the Communist party newspaper Pravda marking the 53rd anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, reflected easing of tensions between the Communist neighbors.

CAIRO—Sudan accused the United States and Israel Sunday of airlifting white mercenaries and heavy arms to the southern Sudanese rebellion in a large-scale operation aimed at forcing Sudan out of the Arab alliance against Israel. Maj. Gen. Khaled Hassan Abbas, Sudan's defense minister, told a news conference in Khartoum reported by Egypt's official Middle East news agency that Sudanese forces recently captured four important strongholds in Equatoria province, including a fully equipped airstrip and large quantities of arms and ammunition, thereby "breaking the back" of the 14-year-old rebellion.

Clinical proof

Speed cause of artery blocking disease

Editor's note: This is the concluding part of a story reporting the results of medical research which discovered methamphetamine to be the cause of a disease which destroys arteries leading to major organs. Part one was printed in Friday's Emerald.

LOS ANGELES AP—Eight doctors reported Thursday a newly discovered, sometimes fatal disease among users of dangerous drugs—especially Methamphetamine, known to drug users as "speed" or "meth."

By conservative estimate, 10 per cent of "speed" users will get the disease, one of the doctors said.

"Meth" or "speed" comes in white or varicolored tablets and also in a clear to yellow liquid.

"Deaths occurring in young people using a large variety of drugs have often remained unexplained," the report said.

The disease destroys arteries leading to major organs—kidneys, stomach, small intestine, liver pancreas and other organs, the doctors said.

The doctors said the disease resembles another called periarteritis nodosa, also a disease of the arteries. Dr. Philip Citron, a member of the medical team, was asked if the 30 patients who apparently had necrotizing angiitis—among the total of 50 studied—would die.

"If it's like periarteritis nodosa—and I think it is—they probably will," he said. "With treatment we can control many of the symptoms, but we think it probably will be fatal to them."

"With the classic form—periarteritis nodosa—about half will live five years. It's too early to start speculating about how long those people are going to live."

"Periarteritis nodosa has been known for over 100 years. It involves people in their 40s and 50s, four to one males. It is a progressive disease with a high rate of mortality: over 50 per cent in patients who are treated, 87 per cent in patients who are untreated. However, the most recent article states it is a uniformly fatal disease."

"In drug-abuse patients we see they have identical lesions—changes in arteries—on autopsy. The clinical appearance is identical."

"The major difference is in the age group. Instead of 40- and 50-year-olds we're dealing with teen-agers and 20-year-olds."

What do autopsies on victims of the newly found disease show?

"The kidneys are usually small and heavily scarred," said Citron. "There's usually blockage of the arteries, the blood vessels leading to or inside the organ."

"There's also an appearance like strings of sausages in some vessels, on both X-ray and autopsy. The vessel narrows so much as to occlude the passage of blood."

Of the total of 50 patients now examined, approximately 30 have evidence of changes in their arteries, Citron said.

Does that mean they have the disease? "Most likely, yes. That's 60 per cent incidence. But even with 50 patients it's difficult to say what the incidence of this disease will be among drug users generally."

"In a thousand cases it might not run 60 per cent. We hope it wouldn't run over 10 per cent. But we have little to base that hope on."

Citron, who wrote the team's report continued:

"One of the most disquieting things about this whole study is that in the original 14, five patients had no

symptoms related to this disease. They came to the hospital with other problems. One had a broken thumb. Several had taken overdoses of barbiturates.

"It's disquieting because here we have patients without any symptoms who do have severe disease. They have gone on to develop symptoms."

One additional death has occurred among the 50 cases. The victim was male.

Of the original 14 patients studied, six were female, eight male. Of the first four who died, three were young women, one a man.

But "no one so far has developed the disease from taking what we consider normal doses," Citron said.

He said the 50 patients were taking the preparation "in a drug-abuse manner."

"They get what they call 'the rush,' a heightened feeling of awareness, and apparently lose the anxieties associated with day-to-day living," Citron said.

He said the drug, called "bennies" in one form, is often used in competitive sports by athletes who think it increases physical ability, and by students staying awake to study for exams.

Citron said drug-abusers quickly build up a tolerance to the drug and go on from normal to stronger doses.

He said the researchers have little evidence as to what causes the action on blood vessels.

He said the researchers have little evidence as to what causes the action on blood vessels. "It could be due to the drug itself," he said, "or the fact that methamphetamine causes a release of norepinephrin, a substance similar to adrenalin."