

Beriberi Is Not Uncommon, But Is Rarely Diagnosed

Boston — (Science Service) — Beriberi, a dietary disease generally associated with the Orient, is "probably not an uncommon disease in the United States," two Detroit physicians have reported. However, from the few reports on it in the current American medical literature, it apparently is rarely diagnosed.

In the United States, beriberi is primarily associated with alcoholic patients, according to Dr. Paul L. Wolf, resident, department of pathology, Wayne State University Affiliated hospitals and Dr. Murray B. Levin, resident, department of internal medicine, City of Detroit Receiving Hospital and Wayne State University College of Medicine.

In two instances of Shoshin beriberi described by the doctors in an article in the New England Journal of Medicine both victims had foregone food for liquor for a period of days.

In one case, where the disease was recognized and thiamine therapy applied, "the patient made a dramatic recovery."

Five Deaths Reported

Failure to diagnose the other case resulted in death five and a half hours after admission to the hospital.

The reporting doctors consider the disease in its alcoholic manifestations "a medical emergency" to which more attention should be given so that diagnosis and treatment may be applied in time to prevent fatalities.

Beriberi is an ancient disease caused by inadequate diet and resulting vitamin deficiency, particularly of B-1 (thiamine). It was first described in Oriental literature as far back as 2697 B.C.; but it was not mentioned in Western accounts until 4,000 years later in 1642 A.D.

Symptoms Described

Shoshin beriberi is characterized by sudden, severe heart attack that may result in death within a few hours. It is characterized by shortness of breath, swelling of ankles, and other symptoms associated with heart ailments. The symptoms of less acute forms of beriberi are extreme lassitude, anemia, muscular atrophy, and paralysis.

The accepted therapy today for all beriberi is administration of thiamine either orally or intravenously, depending upon the severity of the disease. Shoshin beriberi is rarely seen in the Orient where it accounts for about five per cent of the disease involving heart functions.

New Solutions To Re-entry Problem

Akron, Ohio, (Science Service) — A new solution to the re-entry problems of space vehicles — a n.t. pop-up balloons — has been developed by the Goodyear Aircraft corporation here.

The balloons are designed to stabilize and slow down nose cones and manned capsules as they re-enter the upper atmosphere. By reducing the speed of re-entry, a drag balloon can reduce the amount of heat caused by friction with the atmosphere and thus save a space vehicle from burning up.

Company engineers call the drag balloons "Ballutes." In the proposed slowing of the vehicle, a parachute ejected at lower altitudes is also used.

Inflates Quickly

A Ballute nine feet in diameter will be evaluated this summer with a Cree test missile. The Ballute inflates in a tenth of a second. It will be deployed behind the Cree missile for stabilization.

Once the missile is stabilized, the balloon will be reeled out to slow re-entry. The Ballute is made of coated fabric. It has already been tested at two centers of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Langley Research Center at Hampton, Va., and Lewis Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio.

Policeman Locked Up in His Work

Louisville, Ky. — A patrolman was the first victim of a drive by Louisville city police to make sure that churches and schools keep their windows locked after hours.

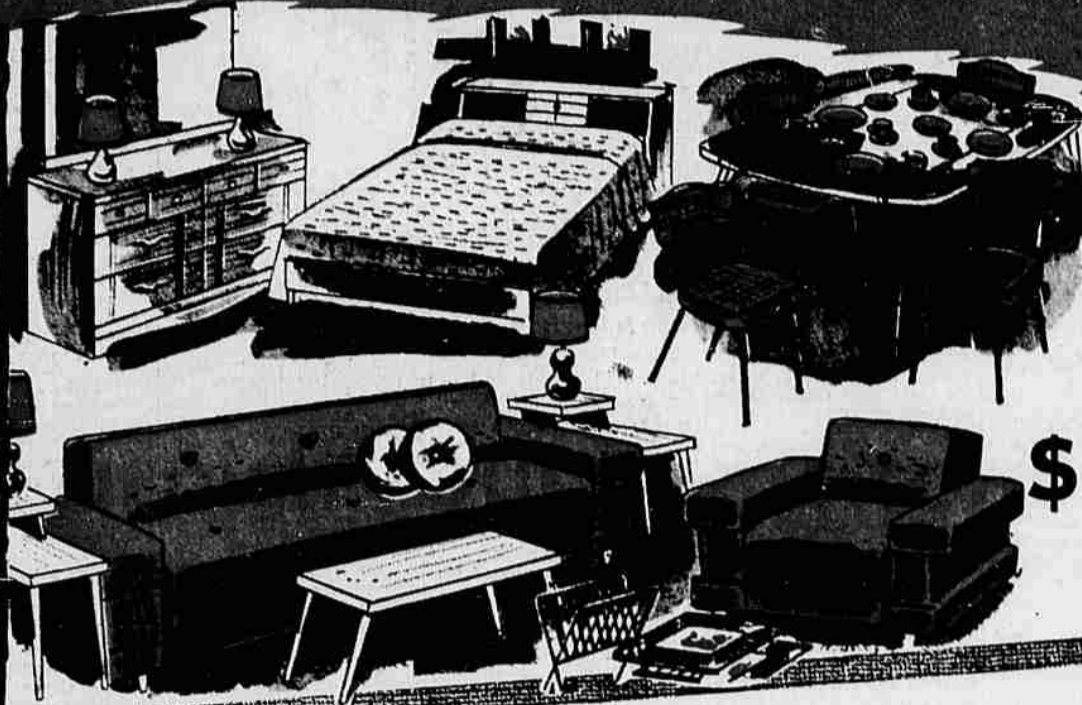
The patrolman, Tom Jeter, had gone down to the basement locker room of a grade school to close an open window when the door slammed shut and locked behind him. Jeter finally "sprung" himself by picking the lock with a coat hanger.

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