

Is Your Doctor Abreast of Science?

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NOT LONG AGO in a small Midwestern town, a baby was seriously ill, vomiting with such uncontrollable frequency that its life clearly was in danger.

Remarkable progress has been made in recent years in diagnosing the causes of such ailments. But the child's doctor was years out of medical school and miles from a research center where such advances usually originate. Would he be familiar with the latest discoveries, which could mean life or death for this small child?

Medical research moves rapidly—it has progressed more in this century than in all previous ones combined. Yet of what benefit are medical discoveries to you unless your doctor knows of them and how they might help you?

In the case of the baby, the doctor had kept abreast of progress. A few weeks earlier, he had heard a tape-recorded report on adrenal insufficiency of the newborn. He quickly made the diagnosis and treated the baby as detailed in the lecture. Today the child is alive and healthy.

Is your doctor as closely abreast of science? If a member of your family suffers a type of heart failure caused by potassium deficiency, for example, will he know it is unaffected by digitalis but readily responds to a teaspoon of potassium? And as medical research continues to advance, can he keep abreast, ever able to provide the most up-to-date medical care, though his diploma is dated years earlier?

To fulfill his obligations to himself and others,



Dr. E. Vincent Askey

every doctor must keep up with science. How the typical doctor manages to do so, no matter where he lives and practices, is in my opinion one of the great untold behind-the-scenes dramas in medicine today.

Here are four ways your doctor keeps up:

1. New communications aids. With at least 50 or 60 hours a week devoted to seeing patients, time is precious. But new techniques make "in-between" periods count significantly.

Several years ago, for instance, a consultant to the Los Angeles Medical Society had an idea: why not tape-record summaries of lectures and medical articles for busy doctors? Now, doctors obtain tapes they can play while eating, shaving, or driving to and from calls.

America's first color telecast was for doctors: an operation. Last year in one series alone, 125,000 doctors in 50 cities heard talks and saw demonstrations of new medical techniques—and another 100,000 saw them on film.

In New York, Albany Medical College regularly beams noon-hour lectures to doctors in 21 hospitals in two states via an FM hookup that permits listeners to ask questions. Other cities have similar sessions. Their value has been incalculable.

2. Data "on his doorstep." Some 1,000 medical journals discuss every important medical development, and every doctor receives several such publications. He also has access to the finest medical films, for which the American Medical Association alone arranges 5,000 showings a year. And he can borrow "package libraries" on any disease from medical schools or the AMA.

In several states, circuit teams now visit small-town and rural doctors, personally bringing the latest research discoveries. When an important



Each year, medical schools offer doctors more than 2,000 "refresher" courses in every field.

Whatever the date on his diploma, your physician's bag should contain medicine's latest weapons

new drug is ready, pharmaceutical houses quickly send vital data about it to the most remote areas.

3. "Refresher" programs. Periodic medical conventions, from the two major AMA meetings annually to state or county conferences, actually are important "cram" courses. More importantly, perhaps, nearly 2,000 formal "postgraduate" courses are offered by medical schools each year. Ranging in length from a few hours to a year, they provide the most up-to-date, personally supervised training in virtually any field in which your doctor might feel the need to brush up.

In Boiling Spring, N.C., for example, four physicians in group practice have arranged it so one takes a 12-month "study" leave every seventh year. Doctors affiliated with a hospital in Belmond, Iowa, arrange to send at least one representative to every important medical meeting, and he in turn briefs the others on his return.

4. Medical "teamwork." Because no one person could master the mass of medical knowledge available, the new concept of the medical "team" is all-important. Today, no matter where you live, your doctor consults with other physicians; refers you to a specialist if specialized knowledge is required; phones leading research centers.

He uses every new emergency tool available. For example, he can phone any of 200 "Poison Information Centers" and immediately determine the antidote necessary in cases of accidental poisoning.

What does all this mean to you? If a researcher has discovered something in his laboratory which may save your life, you won't be denied the benefit of it through your doctor's not knowing of it in time. As medical science moves forward, so does your doctor. Thus, he can continue to offer you the finest medical care ever known.

COVER:

Photographer Richard Heimann focuses on Lucille Ball, who's all set for Easter in a picture hat of shiny black, rough straw with a unique ripple brim. For more on holiday hats and Lucy, turn to page 16.

Family Weekly

March 26, 1961

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Address all communications about editorial features to
Family Weekly, 60 E. 56th St., New York 22, N. Y.

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