

The Medical Roundup

by

Walter Alvarez

Emeritus Consultant in Medicine
Mayo Clinic
Emeritus Professor of Medicine
Mayo Clinic
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According to Dr. Klaus Miehke of Germany, who spoke at a recent doctor's meeting in the city of Washington, European statistics show that "muscular rheumatism" ranks fourth among commonly made diagnoses. The main symptom is localized pain -- the

cause of which may not be clearly understood.

Many physicians think it due to a tension state, but Dr. Miehke doubts this. From 125 patients with "muscular pain," the doctor took "biopsies" under local anesthesia -- in other words he cut out little bits of muscle, and studied very thin sections of them under a microscope.

He found no microscopic abnormality in 23 of the cases, but in the rest of them, he found changes which he

thought could have something to do with causing the pain. In most cases, the signs of disease were found, not in the muscle, but in the connective tissue or gristle-like tissue which surrounds the muscle-fibers and blood vessels, and this seemed significant.

The doctor tested the patients' blood for signs of a beginning rheumatoid arthritis, and found it in 13 cases. In 46 of his 102 patients, it looked as if the person's main trouble was "fibrositis," which is a sort of a mild relative of arthritis. At intervals throughout the patient's life, this disease can affect the tissues around the joints. Fortunately, it does not damage nor deform the bones. I have had this disease ever since I was 7 years old. Occasionally, it gets so bad that for days or weeks I have pain in a wrist, or a shoulder, or I may limp because of a sore hip joint or a sore ankle, but I have never taken any medicine for it, and always within days or weeks, the pain has gone, and I have been well. Unlike arthritis, this disease does not cause the "red blood sedimentation rate" (a simple laboratory test) to go up, as it does so decidedly in cases of rheumatoid arthritis.

Seven of Dr. Miehke's patients appeared to have what is called a diffuse collagen disease -- a puzzling illness something like rheumatoid arthritis. Four had rheumatic fever. From his studies, Dr. Miehke concluded that, in most cases of supposed muscular pain, the diagnosis should be "fibrositis."

Surgery for Arthritis

A patient of mine, a beautiful woman who, for several years, had suffered greatly with rheumatoid arthritis, got well without any treatment. The disease calmed down all by itself, as it sometimes does, but it left her with her hands and feet badly deformed -- so badly that she could hardly walk and could hardly pick up a spoon.

Then, a friend of mine, an able orthopedist, remodeled both her hands and her feet so that, again, she could walk fairly well and she could use her hands. Now I read that, today, more and more often, orthopedists are going ahead to do this sort of work for arthritis whose disease has calmed down, but has left their joints deformed.

Dr. Alvarez has more information on treatment for and causes of arthritis in his booklet, "Arthritis and Rheumatism." To obtain it, send 25 cents and a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MMT, The Register and Tribune Syndicate, Box 957, Des Moines 4, Iowa.

The Left-Handed Child

People write asking me if they should try to train a left-handed child to use his right hand. Often someone objects, saying that a change-over will cause trouble; it may cause a mental disturbance or it may cause stuttering. Actually, I have read a good deal on this, and my impression is that it is a good idea to train a left-handed child to use his right hand as well as his left.

It would be a wonderful thing if he could use his right hand for writing, even though he might still use his left hand for throwing a ball, or for hammering a nail into a board. I have a left-handed grandson and I never thought of fussing at him, and certainly I never thought of doing anything to make life unhappy for him. As we all know, hundreds of thousands of able people write very well with the left hand.

It can be an advantage to some men to be able to use either hand about equally well. My old professor of surgery, Dr. Emmett Rixford, used to go to the blackboard and draw excellent pictures of broken bones, using both hands at the same time. So far as I can learn, a left-handed boy can change over and use his right hand without getting into trouble with stuttering. Left-handed people are so commonly seen that I imagine their peculiarity is seldom commented on or jeered at by their right-handed fellows.

Dairy Show Set in Grants Pass May 19

Grants Pass -- The Junior Spring Dairy show sponsored by the Rogue River Jersey Cattle club has been scheduled May 19 beginning at 9 a.m., at the Josephine county fairgrounds, Grants Pass.

The annual event is open to boys and girls of all ages in both Jackson and Josephine counties, and to all breeds of dairy cattle.

A dairy judging contest will open the show, followed by dairy demonstrations and showmanship contests. A plaque or trophy will be awarded to the champion in each division.

Highlight of the show is the coronation of the 1962 Rogue River Valley Jersey Princess, Miss Karen Jossy, the 1961 princess, will announce the winner and crown her successor.

Area residents may attend without charge. Lunch will be available at the grounds.

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