

The Medical Roundup

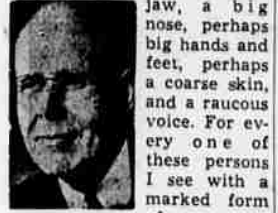
by

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(Register and Tribune Syndicate,
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Acromegaly, or Gigantism

Every so often I see a man who is perhaps seven feet tall, who has a big lower



jaw, a big nose, perhaps big hands and feet, perhaps a coarse skin, and a raucous voice. For every one of these persons I see with a marked form of acromegaly, I see many more with a form so mild that many an observant young doctor will fail to notice it or realize what it is.

The person may have only an overly-wide or big nose and perhaps a slightly over-size face. Some of these men and women, because of their badly proportioned faces, are distressed because they feel they are homely.

In these cases, what happened, in childhood, was that the little pituitary gland at the base of the brain became too active, and produced too much of the "growth hormone." Fortunately, in all but a few cases, the gland later quieted down and did no more harm. I cannot remember when I saw one of these people who needed an operation to remove from the gland a little adenoma or benign (non-cancerous) tumor.

With x-rays, one can show that many of these people have a large "sella turcica" (Turkish saddle) which is a doctor's name for a bony saddle-like cup at the base of the skull which contains the pituitary gland. As the gland enlarges, the bony "saddle" enlarges. Years ago, my good friend Professor Herbert Evans isolated from the pituitary glands of dogs the "growth hormone." On injecting it into little dachshunds, he caused them to grow into great big hound-like dogs. Recently, Dr. Li has obtained enough of this growth hormone from human pituitary glands to cause some stunted boys to grow. The sad feature is that growth hormone made from the pituitary glands of cattle is so different chemically from that made from the glands of men that it cannot be counted on to help boys.

Chemists Working

It is greatly to be hoped that, some day, a simple growth-producing chemical can be made perhaps from the growth hormone of animals — a drug that will cause boys and girls to grow taller. Chemists now are working hard on the problem. I hope that a few hundred people who read this will not immediately write me or Dr. Li for some growth hormone to help their child. I haven't any at all, and Dr. Li has only enough for a few experiments. He has none to hand out. One can easily see that it is not easy to get pituitary glands from people who have just died and have not been embalmed.

People who for long have suffered from acromegaly write to ask me if their faces will start growing again, and I am pretty sure they will not. Others write to ask if their minds will be affected, and I see no reason for fearing that. I am sorry that I know of no treatment that will cause an acromegalic's legs to shorten, or his face to grow smaller and more handsome.

Amebiasis

Many persons, and especially those who get a diarrhea while traveling in a foreign country, have now been found or supposedly found, to have amebas (a single-celled microscopic organism) in their bowel. A poorly-trained or overly-enthusiastic laboratory technician can easily make a mistake because amebic cysts (like tiny eggs) look somewhat like the fat droplets which are common in stools. Also, there are several types of amebas, and probably only one of them causes trouble.

Also, few people, and some of us physicians, do not know that a person's bowels can be full of amebas and yet be perfectly healthy. I remember a big, husky Mexican rancher whose sick wife, while going through the Mayo Clinic, talked him into getting a check-up.

We found his bowel to be swarming with almost every ameba and worm known to man; he was a walking menagerie; but he maintained that he felt wonderfully well; he had never been ill in his life and had never had any diarrhea. This is why, when I find a few of the bad amebas, called histolytic, in a person's bowel, I often say to

die. So I gave six or sometime 12 tablets of carbarsone at one time. This one "wallop" was not big enough to hurt the man, but that day, it usually killed off all of his amebas. Another thing I learned, was that if with most of the amebas killed off the patient wasn't any better, his or her troubles were not due to the amebas — and it was up to me to find a new and better diagnosis. This is a good thing to know.

Do you know the proper diet for hypertension? Exactly what is normal blood pressure? Dr. Alvarez answers these and other questions in his booklet, "High Blood Pressure." 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.

CONVERTED BY CROOKS

Moscow —(UPI)—The newspaper Red Star said Saturday a military accessories factory in Leningrad was converted by crooks into a private plant producing pens, folders and shaving goods.



YIKES!—Checkers, a Chicago canine, encountered a strange sight as he looked up a tree in Schiller Woods forest preserve when he saw a pair of hands protruding from a hole in a tree. What Checkers didn't know was that a girl had climbed the tree to perform the trick. (UPI)



Small Worlds Around Us

By LYNN M. WATKINS

(Register and Tribune Syndicate 1962)

Prolific Hamster Is His Own Predator

Not even the zoologist knew much about the golden hamster until about 30 years ago when half a dozen of the tiny animals were discovered in Jordan in a hole in the ground.

Residents of the region knew there was a small, golden-colored animal that raided grain crops and seemed to enjoy living in a dry, almost waterless area, but they accepted the animal as a part of the native fauna.

No Equal

The scientist who discovered the babies was interested. He took the animals home and raised them. He made some startling discoveries. By the time the youngsters were

two months old they became parents.

As experimental animals in medical research they have no equal, being particularly valuable in cancer research.

This, mainly, because the hamster is tough, easily raised and has two cheek pouches. In these fleshy receptacles, human cancers can be implanted and the progress of the disease checked from day to day.

Mrs. Hamster is ready to raise a family when she is two months old. In a little over two weeks she will give birth to as many as eight tiny hamsters. These little ones will be raising their own children in another couple of months.

In the meantime, the original mother has produced a couple more litters. She only

has to wait about three weeks between litters. Such a staggering birth rate makes the efforts of mice or guinea pigs seem pretty amateurish. The rabbit isn't even playing in the same league.

Tops As Pets

As pets the hamsters are tops. They are playful, harmless, clean and always good natured. With such a proclivity for biological multiplication, how does it happen the hamsters haven't taken over? With such an exploding population potential they could overrun the place. Or, why aren't we up to our necks in hamsters?

The reason is simple. If left alone, the hamsters are their own predators. Even

mama and papa hamster, just beginning to raise a family, will leap at one or the other is dead. Every hamster seems to have an irresistible urge to kill another hamster.

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