

The Medical Roundup

by

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On Choosing a Nursing Home

As I said in a recent column, often the children of parents who have gone into their second childhood and hence are difficult to handle don't know which way to turn. If they have sufficient money, they probably will think first of putting their parent into some sort of a "nursing home" or "convalescent home" or "chronic disease hospital."

The important point that people should know, as my friend, Dr. Lewis Terman of Chicago, was just telling me, is that there are different types of these hospitals or homes, all with different facilities, and different degrees of ability to give good service.

In the best type of "chronic hospital," as Dr. Terman says, there will be a good building with good equipment. There will be a full-time physician in charge—a man who specializes in the care of old people. There will be at least one registered nurse on every shift, and the ratio of nurses to patients will be high. There should be a full-time physiotherapist, and if the place is large enough, there should be a full-time laboratory technician, and x-ray facilities.

The food should be good. The reputation of the place should be high, and prefer-

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ably, the place should have been running long enough so as to become well organized. If possible, the children of the patient should try to find out something of the reputation of the place. Sometimes, the family doctor, if they have one, will know or can find out.

Much Depends on Kindness

Much will depend upon the kindness with which patients are treated. Often, the children will have to consider the cost of the care. Naturally, the better the care, the higher the cost is likely to be—but not necessarily. Obviously, much depends on how ill and incapacitated the old patient is. If he has diabetes, a bad heart, bad arteries and a disturbed brain, he will require a maximum of medical and nursing care, and then he should be in the best type of medical home. If, however, about all he needs is custodial care, to keep him from rambling around and getting run over by a car, he can get by in another type of home.

In many cases, if the children go through the institution, they will sense not only the attitude of the head doctor and the nurses and attendants, but they will see if the place is clean and well kept up. They will see if there are any recreational facilities, and they will see if any effort is made to rehabilitate patients; to get them out of bed and perhaps out in a garden. It is not pleasant to think of putting a parent in a place in which the only thought will be to house and feed him until he dies. It is well if the building is fireproof and air-conditioned.

I like Dr. Terman's thought that a beautiful building, alone, cannot bring a patient a needed glass of water. Only kind attendants will do this. Many of the patients in nursing homes have had heart attacks or strokes, or both, and they have diabetes, high blood pressure, severe Parkinson's syndrome, chronic heart disease, perhaps an unfortunate result of a prostatic oper-

ation, or perhaps the poor results of a fractured hip operation. Many of the old people have had a series of little strokes which have left them confused and forgetful and incompetent to take care of themselves.

One difficulty is sometimes that, since the patient has not been legally committed, he or she can get up and insist on leaving the home. Often, in such cases, the children have to come and do their best to talk the parent into staying where he or she is.

The big thing for the children to do, as Dr. Terman says, is to insist on finding out whether the institution under consideration is properly equipped to take good care of their parent's particular illness. Obviously, a person who needs much care because of perhaps a bad diabetes, should not be left in a place where there is no resident physician. Also, he should not be in a place in which the manager has never had the sort of training that he would need in order to do a good job.

What causes arthritis and is there a cure? Dr. Alvarez answers your questions 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.

JFK ASKS PROBE

Washington—President Kennedy has asked Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy for a report on the jailing of Martin Luther King Jr. and another minister at Albany, Ga., the White House said Wednesday.

Antialcoholic Campaign Is Launched In Hungary

By GARY HAMPTON
United Press International
Budapest—(UPI)—Communist Hungary has launched something like a state-directed "Alcoholics Anonymous" in a national drive against excessive drinking.

Hungarians are not hard-drinking people and there are few drunks to be seen in streets and bars. Authorities apparently are concerned at a rise in the number of crimes committed by people who have been drinking and of industrial and traffic accidents caused by intoxication.

The government campaign ranges from warning all school children against the dangers of drink to trying to rehabilitate chronic drinkers in alcoholic clinics where they can receive free medical treatment, advice and companionship.

Other measures include closing down many thousands of low-class "drink-shops" and purging press, radio and television of material which might encourage Hungarians to drink. Instead, these media now will promote natural fruit drinks put on sale especially for the campaign. Legislation will be passed to protect the families of alcoholics and stiffer penalties for crimes and accidents involving drink already have been introduced.

Few figures are available on the problem. The Communist party newspaper "Nepszabadsag," however, recently noted that consumption of rum and other spirits was "significantly higher" last year than in 1960, adding

that 20 per cent of all crimes in 1960 were committed by people under the influence of alcohol. This figure was three per cent higher than in 1958.

Also, Budapest police have warned a growing number of local moonshiners against the risk of poisoning their clients by distilling spirits from wood alcohol bought on the black market.

The government has scheduled completion of 17 permanent alcohol clinics throughout Hungary by the end of 1962. Ten already are working, seven in Budapest and three in important provincial centers.

These clinics treat less-advanced alcoholics who attend regularly while continuing work, wherever possible, and living at home. Treatment is voluntary for the present.

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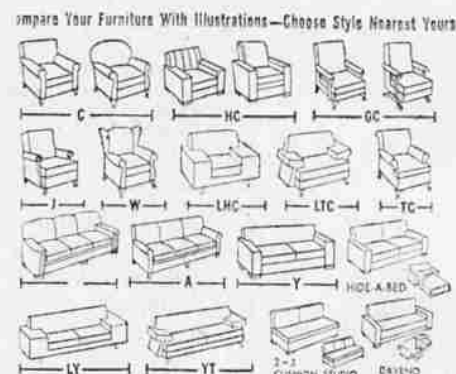
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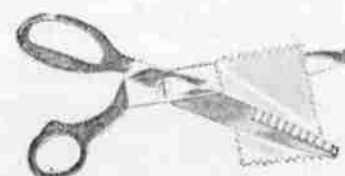
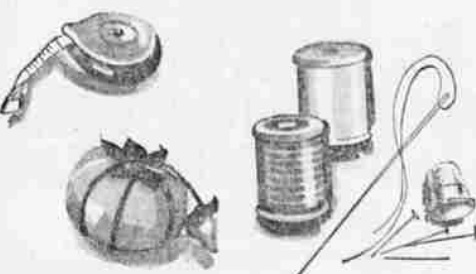
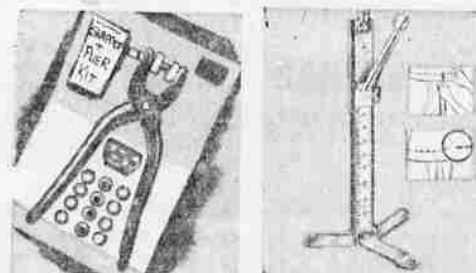
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