

The Medical Roundup

by

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Hypersensitivity

Many persons appear to be born hypersensitive, like the persons who, in late summer, react violently to the many pollen grains which enter their noses to produce hay fever or asthma. Millions of other persons are breathing in the same pollen grains, but they are not reacting violently enough to be ill.

Much of what I now go on to say may be hard to understand; much of it is hard for me to understand myself, but perhaps I can give my readers some glimpse of the new ideas which are now becoming more and more important in medicine.

Much information is being obtained of late in regard to these hypersensitivities, and some surprising facts are being learned. Perhaps most surprising is the idea that some of us can at times become seriously ill when we react violently to some of our own proteins (the main chemicals in meat).

One of the first diseases of this type was the so-called serum sickness, which in some persons can be violent after a little horse serum has been injected to give protection against an infectious disease. When in 1918, one of my children had a severe pneumonia she was given an antiserum. Soon thereafter she developed a serum sickness which was almost as bad as the pneumonia. She broke out all over with "hives" and a rash; she had fever, tremendous itching, and a great deal of discomfort. Fortunately, she cleared up entirely. Probably even today some 40 years later, it would be dangerous to give her even a tiny dose of horse serum; she might get another violent reaction.

Sickness Can Develop

It has been shown that rabbits that some, when injected with an antigen (a foreign protein) do not develop an antibody; others have low levels of antibody formation, and some have large amounts of antibody circulating in their blood. It is in the third group that acute serum sickness can develop. According to Drs. Raymond D. A. Peterson and Robert A. Good, the rabbits which, when injected, get low levels of antibody production can develop chronic nephritis—a kidney disease which is similar to that which develops in some men and women.

Another explanation for the development of curious diseases in some persons is their lack of the gamma globulin which is normally found in the blood. As many parents now know, if injected quickly, gamma globulin can save their children from coming down with an attack of measles or hepatitis. Recently, research workers have found that adults who lack gamma globulin easily can get what is called a collagen disease—such as rheumatoid arthritis, dermatomyositis (in which the skin and the muscles under the skin are inflamed), or a generalized

lupus erythematosus, or a thrombotic leukopenic purpura (in which the person gets black and blue spots under the skin, together with other troubles.) It appears that the person who can make only minute quantities of antibodies is the one who, when a "foreign protein" enters the body, is likely to develop chronic diseases of the arteries.

Another difficulty of some people is called ATOPY. This is a term much used by allergists. The patients are subject to asthma, hay fever, and eczema; and mixed up in the production of the symptoms, is a substance called histamine. This is released when the invading antigen and the skin-sensitizing antibody combine. Some of the persons who are subject to atopic disease lack gamma globulin.

Another peculiarity of our human reactions to invading proteins is the development of what are called cross-reacting antibodies. For instance, in cases of so-called infectious mononucleosis, (an infection of young people) there is what is called a heterophile antibody. This reacts, not with the as-yet unknown virus, but with other substances. Peculiar antibodies may be at fault also in cases of lupus erythematosus.

Changes Take Place

Peculiar is what is called sympathetic ophthalmia. When a person loses one eye, due perhaps to a penetrating injury, changes take place in the proteins of that eye which cause the body to regard it as a foreign body. Accordingly, antibodies develop against it, and these can soon destroy the other eye. Often the only way to save the good eye is quickly to remove the injured eye.

Today, there is tremendous interest in the discovery that although the body generally will not make antibodies against its own tissues, when slight changes take place in the antigenic characteristics of some tissue, this tissue can then be regarded by the body as a foreign substance, which must be destroyed. Then there is trouble. For instance, in certain diseases of the kidney one can demonstrate in the patient's blood antibodies which tend to injure the kidneys.

Another peculiar feature of immunity is that some body cells, when they combine with some chemical which has been given as a medicine, behave as antigens which then are attacked by the body. Perhaps this explains how a disease such as lupus erythematosus can be produced temporarily by the taking of a certain drug.

To know more about your allergy, read Dr. Alvarez' booklet, "Asthma, Allergy and Hay Fever." 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.

INSPECTED FARMS

Moscow — (UPI) — The Soviet news agency Tass said Premier Nikita Khrushchev inspected collective farms in the Ukraine Tuesday.

Edith Green Leads Supporters Seeking Equal Pay for Women

By YVONNE FRANKLIN
Mail Tribune Washington Bureau
Washington (Special) — Rep. Edith Green and a phalanx of supporters marched through the House of Representatives today for equal pay for women on last week, although the Democrats fell back for Republican amendments.



Franklin

Mrs. Green, who has been prodding congressional leaders on this bill ever since she came to Congress, handled much of the debate during the four-hour House battle. She was flanked at the leader's table by Northwest Democratic Reps. Julia Butler Hansen of Washington and Gracie Post of Idaho, and tilted microphone lanes with GOP Reps. Catherine May of Washington and Katharine St. George of New York who led Republicans in amending the bill to change key wording.

For the second time in history a woman, Rep. Edna Kelly (D-N.Y.) sat in the exalted speaker's chair as

chairman of the whole House during the debate. She had a very busy time. Amendments flew about like rockets. The hubbub of voice frustrated speakers; members were continually assailed by raucous cries of "vote, vote" and order had to be restored countless times.

The bill as written stated that no employer who hires over 25 workers in interstate commerce "shall discriminate between employees on the basis of sex by paying wages to any employee at a rate less than the rate at which he pays wages to any employee of the opposite sex for work of comparable character on jobs the performance of which requires comparable skills."

Mrs. St. George, known to be an ardent feminist, proved to be a brilliant field general for the GOP when at the beginning of debate she moved to amend the bill by substituting the word "equal" for "comparable."

She claimed "comparable" gave too much latitude to labor arbiters. Democratic opponents argued that past labor arbitration history had established the word "comparable" as a classic word capable of enforcement, and

that "equal" was not enforceable.

But Mrs. St. George with rhetoric skill and a gift for the emotionally-winning phrase quoted Susan B. Anthony—"Men their rights and nothing more; women their rights and nothing less" adding a ringing "Equality is what we want and nothing more and nothing less."

Mrs. St. George sunk the Democrats and won laughter and applause by quoting from the Declaration of Independence that "all men are cre-

Smokey Says:



Give forests a break—use your ash tray!

ated equal." She asked the Democrats if they would change that to "all men are created comparable."

Although her forces lost this skirmish, Mrs. Green predicted later that the wording would be changed back to "comparable" in conference. The Senate has not yet passed an equal pay bill this session.

Another disputed point was the bill's provision which forbade employers from lowering the wages of male employees in order to pay equal wages to both men and women. The Republicans successfully deleted this section amid Democratic cries of anguish that this was "a step backward and a move to depress wages."

Republicans argued, and Democrats Green and Labor subcommittee chairman Herbert Zelinko did not answer the charge, that it is wording allowed the employers no flexibility. Charles Goodell (R-N.Y.) argued that if an employer was faced with a huge loss because of having to pay women more and might fire women or "try to devise some means of evading the law."

Angered by the successful Republican and southern Democratic efforts to substantially change her bill, Mrs. Green strode to the well (front) of the House on a crucial amendment which would have killed the bill by exempting from the law those

states which have equal pay statutes.

"I think now we see the clear picture of what the Republicans have done," she said. "They have taken out of the bill the enforcement procedures. They have said upon the record 'Oh, we love women and we want women to be paid the same wages men are paid, but we make it impossible to enforce the federal law, then we say that the federal law has no meaning—that the state laws will take precedence.'"

The House quieted while she was talking on this point, and she was joined by Republicans, among them Catherine May of Washington, who opposed the amendment. It was defeated.

When the bill was passed by voice vote, applause swept the Chamber and Mrs. Green was soon surrounded by members congratulating her on the victory. She said later that although she was disappointed in the successful amendments which changed "comparable" to "equal" and which had no safeguard in preventing employers from lowering salaries, she was happy that the bill had passed.

"This is the first time an equal pay law has passed the House. This country has made great progress in discrimination against other minority groups, but we have lagged behind so far as prejudices against women is concerned."



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