

The Medical Roundup

by *Walter Wilson*
Emeritus Consultant to Medicine
Mayo Clinic
Emeritus Professor of Medicine
Mayo Clinic
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Lymphedema of the Legs
Dr. Alexander Schirger, E. G. Harrison Jr., and J. M. Jones of the Mayo Clinic have reported a study of 131 cases of what is called lymphedema of the legs. This is a disease in which one or both legs become enormously swollen, because of the accumulation in the tissues under the skin of an excess amount of the fluid which normally bathes and nourishes the cells of the body.

In many islands of the South Seas the disease is called elephantiasis, and is due to the introduction into the tissues (by mosquito bites) of a tiny worm which obstructs what are called the tiny lymph channels. Fortunately, in this country we haven't this form of the disease. Here, lymphedema seems often to be due to some inborn defect in the construction of the lymph channels.

A woman can quickly tell if her leg swelling is due to lymphedema or to dropsy — due to a bad heart, bad kidneys or perhaps bad veins. All she has to do is press her thumb against the swollen tissue. If for a moment it leaves a little pit or indentation, it is probably a dropsy (edema) while if it does not pit, it is probably a lymphedema.

In 123 of the 131 cases reported, the disease started early in life, and was probably due to some congenital abnormality in the lymph vessels. This type of lymphedema often appears early in the person's teens.

Cases Fairly Rare
There is another rarer form of the disease which comes after the age of 35. Only when the disease comes after the age of 40 or 50 does one expect that a lymph channel has been obstructed, as perhaps by a cancerous growth. Such cases are fairly rare.

In all but a few of their cases, the Mayo physicians treated the patient with only a strong elastic support. But a number of women, for one reason or another, gave up the use of this support. There is an operation in which the thickened, swollen tissue is cut out and removed. At the Mayo Clinic during several years, only nine of these operations were performed — with good results in eight cases.

Usually, I find surgeons reluctant to perform this operation, perhaps because there is often a good deal of shock to it, and the results can be unsatisfactory. As one can easily

Top in Flattery

Three-Engine Jet Airliner Leaves Boeing Factory

Seattle — 27. Boeing Tuesday rolled out the nation's first three-engine jetliner since the days of the old Ford tri-motor — its new 727 short-range jet.

It bore about as much resemblance to its 35-year-old predecessor as a hurricane does to a house fan. Boeing's latest jet-age entry, carrying a \$4.5 million price tag, has two engines mounted one each side of the rear fuselage and a third inside the fuselage just below the tail assembly. One engine alone costs three times as much as the entire \$30,000 Ford transport.

Test Flights Planned
Boeing's historic roll-out involved the first complete 727 to come off the assembly line here. Eventually, the plane will be turned over to United Air Lines, but it will be used in a grueling flight test program lasting through most of next year. The sleek, though somewhat chunky jet is expected to make its first flight late in January following a \$10 million design and development program.

Five airlines have ordered 127 of the new Boeing, which literally will bring the speed and comfort of a pure jet to routes now flown by older piston and prop-jet airliners. The 727 will carry between 70 and 114 passengers and fully loaded will operate on runways only 3,000 feet long. The new jet is about 37 feet shorter than Boeing's famed 707 transport now used on long-haul trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific flights.

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