

# Cancer Scientists Turn Interest To Venezuelan Virus

By DELOS SMITH  
UPI Science Editor



New York — (UPI) — In cancer science there is a sudden interest in a virus which inflames the brains of horses. When put into eight human beings with far advanced cancer it appeared to prolong the lives of three of them. The interest is not engendered by that medically meaningless statistic. It grows out of scattered incidents over the past 60 years in which a viral infection producing fever seemed to interfere with cancer growth.

"Fever therapy" for cancer has long since been discredited, however. It rarely seems to work. But the horse virus has scientifically raised this question: Could it be a virus specially endowed with chemical properties that interfere with one class of human cancers?

The virus is the one which causes Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis (brain inflammation). It is closely related to viruses which cause the same disease in animals in other parts of the world. Occasionally human beings get infected with them. Their brains become inflamed, often with a fatal outcome. The viruses are spread by insects, usually mosquitoes.

The Venezuelan virus — VEE — came into this experimental picture because there is a strain of it which was taken from a Trinidad horse in 1943 and has been kept

going in laboratory cultures ever since.

**Workers Infected**  
Fifty laboratory workers have been infected with it over the years, by accident. Not one developed brain inflammation, although all had brief illnesses with high fever. That made it seem non-lethal for human beings although it was highly lethal in mice, guinea pigs and other animals.

Nevertheless it has been "attenuated," that is, weakened, by laborious laboratory procedures with the idea of producing a vaccine to protect laboratory workers against

the full-strength virus. This attenuated VEE attracted Drs. W. D. Tigertt, W. H. Crosby, T. O. Berge and their associates of Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.

In 1952 other doctors put another brain-inflaming virus — the West Nile virus — into patients with far advanced cancers of the kind which arise from the body's lymph cells. The cancers seemed to shrink, but the patients developed brain inflammation.

Attenuated VEE might retain any anti-cancer powers it might have although deprived of brain-inflaming

properties, the Walter Reed scientists reasoned. They put

**Edison Honored During Legislative Session**

Salem — (UPI) — Thomas A. Edison was honored at the Oregon Legislature Monday for inventing the light bulb 116 years ago.

All lights in the House and Senate chambers were turned off for a brief period except for two replicas of the incandescent light bulb Edison invented. The bulbs glowed brightly on the rostrums of the Senate president and the Speaker of the House.

it into eight lymph-type cancer patients who apparently were doomed. All known treatments had been used in them and all had failed.

Four were so far advanced in disease their life expectancies were measured in days. In only one did the virus so much as cause a fever. All four died when expected and their cancers were unchanged.

**Feverish Illness**  
The other four had life expectancies measured in months. In all the feverish produced an acute feverish illness of several days duration. When that was over

their pain and other cancer symptoms disappeared. Furthermore, there was objective evidence of a shrinking of their cancers. There was no "cure," of course, but their lives were prolonged many times beyond the medical expectancy.

In carefully measured conservative language the scientists reported this to the technical organ of the National Association for Cancer Research. They suggested the study of VEE in patients with less advanced cancer was "warranted." You may be sure these studies are now under way.

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Eugene — More than 150 new books and 30 important new documents have been added to the University of Oregon library's collection of transportation materials during the past two years.

The additions give the library a collection of 2,300 books, 600 documents and more than 100 journals devoted entirely or in part to transportation, according to Roy J. Sampson, associate professor of transportation in the university school of business administration. Sampson has prepared the first supplement to his bibliography of "Transportation Materials in the University of Oregon Library."

#### Retail Prices of Food Expected To Stay About Same

Washington — (UPI) — The Agriculture department says that retail food prices in the first half of 1963 are expected to average about the same as a year earlier.

Higher prices for fresh fruits and vegetables, hit by freezing weather, are expected to be offset by lower prices for beef, pork and eggs.

In a review of the national food situation, the department noted while the current quarter is the low-supply season for foods such as fresh vegetables, some fresh fruits, and fishery products, the processed forms of these foods are in large supply.

Expenditures up  
The department estimated consumers spent about \$74 billion for food in 1962. This was somewhat more than 4 per cent larger than food expenditures in 1961. Per capita food outlays increased 2.8 per cent, along with the 3.6 per cent gain in per capita consumer income. The volume of food consumed per person in 1962 was about the same as in 1961, with gains in meats and fats and oils offset by declines in the consumption of dairy products and fresh fruits and vegetables.

The department predicted total consumer expenditures for food in 1963 likely will increase but probably not as much as the 4 per cent increase in 1962. Per capita consumption of food may increase a little this year, particularly consumption of meats and poultry.

Little Change Seen  
The department expects little, if any, change in the all-food price level for the year as a whole, compared with 1962.

Exports of foods last year are estimated to have been near the record-large quantity exported in 1961. They were especially strong for fats and oils, while grains decreased some. Early in 1963, food exports were slowed by the shipping strike, but with shipping moving again, these exports will increase. There are ample supplies to take care of domestic needs and still allow large exports.