

The Medical Roundup

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Modern Obstetric Anesthesia

Those millions of women who are in their child-bearing years would doubtless be interested in an article by Drs. D. M. Shirline, H. M. Epstein and E. Seymour Burge, all of Northwestern University Medical school in Chicago.

Through the years, there have been so many changes from one type of obstetrical anesthesia to another, it is interesting now to see what method has been used of late in the big Evanston, Ill., hospital.

From 1957 to 1960, over 2,600 so-called single injection caudal (near the "tailbone") anesthetics were given. These represented 32 per cent of all the obstetric anesthetics given during that period. In 1960, a little more than half of the patients were having deliveries with this single-injection technique, and it was becoming the favorite method of the anesthesiologists and obstetricians.

After a woman has been given the caudal injection, she quickly loses the ability to feel pain in the muscles that are being dilated by the child; the anesthesia then lasts for 90 minutes. This means that the woman "experiences a painless termination to labor and delivery."

A big advantage of this technique is that because of the good relaxation of the perineum, the head of the infant is not subject to so much pressure and molding as is the case when the mother is not helped with a local anesthetic.

Declined in Popularity
During the four years when the study was made, 2,959 "spinal anesthetics" were given at the Evanston Hospital; in the last nine years, the "low spinal block anesthesia" has declined in popularity for several reasons.

Also, during the four-year period, general anesthesia - in which the woman is unconscious - was used in from 22 to 27 per cent of the cases. In some 2 per cent of the cases, no anesthetic was given, either because the woman elected to have a "natural child-birth," or because she had her baby so fast there was no time to give her an anesthetic!

Tic Douloureux
Tic douloureux (tri-facial neuralgia) is a fairly rare disease, but I do get many letters from women asking me about it. Persons with this disease, from time to time, perhaps after eating or talking, have a brief paroxysm of excruciating pain, usually on only one side of the face. It appears to be due to a malfunctioning of the ganglion (module of nerve tissue) from which the three parts of the fifth nerve run out to supply the face with sensation.

Usually, the disease attacks women who are over 50, but sometimes it attacks younger people, and it can attack a man. Usually, the first thing that is done by a neurosurgeon is to inject some alcohol into the ganglion. This is likely to give relief, but it may be for only six months or so.

If an operation is needed, there are two or three types which can be done. They generally give complete relief from the terrible pain, but they are difficult operations, and hence, must be performed by an expert nerve surgeon.

The original operation was had in that it left one side of the face numb, and also left

the front of one eye numb. Sometimes this "numb" eye was injured by dust or sand that got in between the lids. With the new operation, there isn't so much danger of injury to the eye.

Some years ago, a drug was found which some felt was the answer to the problem of curing this disease. It has a tendency to injure the function of the facial nerve, and thereby to cause relief of the pain in it. Often it does relieve the pain, but I have here a letter from Dr. John B. Erich of the Mayo Clinic, who specializes in this field, and he says that they have discontinued the use of the drug at the clinic. In their experience, the distresses which are left in the face are often regarded by the patient as worse and more annoying than the original pain. Dr. Erich says he has seen several patients who, after taking the drug, got these paresthesias (abnormal sensations) on both sides of the face, and are now complaining more about these feelings than they used to do about their pain. Dr. Erich went on to say that some doctors are still enthusiastic about the use of the drug, but at the Mayo Clinic the neurologists have not been impressed with its usefulness.

Parkinson's disease is a slowly progressive disease which arises in a certain part of the brain. It is characterized by much stiffness of certain muscles with a resultant slowness in a person's movements. More information about this sickness may be found in Dr. Alvarez' booklet on "Parkinson's Disease or Shaking Palsy." You may obtain a copy of this booklet by sending 25 cents and a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MMT, Box 937, Des Moines 4, Iowa.

Navy Schedules Thresher Tests

Portsmouth, N.H. - (UPI) - The Navy was scheduled to conduct tests today on simulated submarine compartments in an attempt to find the cause of the Thresher disaster.

Vice Adm. Bernard L. Austin, head of the court, said Wednesday the tests will be conducted at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard to show what a rush of water would do to submarine equipment. Officials said the tests may be private but a statement probably will be issued afterward.

The Navy apparently was trying to find out if a bursting pipe could have disabled the submarine's controls, causing it to drop to the ocean bottom.

Earlier testimony to the court indicated that similar tests had been conducted at Vallejo, Calif. The court of inquiry also was expected to go behind closed doors again today to gather classified evidence it hoped would solve the April 10 sinking of the submarine with 129 men aboard.

At sea, 220 miles off Cape Cod, a six ship flotilla of Navy and oceanographic vessels resumed the search for the Thresher's watery grave. Capt. Frank A. Andrews, in command of the search, said the same 10 square mile area would be covered again.

Leighton, England - (UPI) - The firm of George Garside, Ltd. is exporting sand to Egypt. A spokesman said it was "a very special sand" for use in cement for the Aswan High Dam.

Portland Chosen for Legion Convention

Portland - (UPI) - Portland got word Wednesday it has officially been picked for the 1966 American Legion national convention. The convention is expected to attract upwards of 40,000 persons.

FREEDOM IS TOUGH

London - (UPI) - Charles Perry, 64, who found he couldn't adjust to freedom, was sent back to prison Wednesday for 12 years of preventive detention. Perry, who had been released from prison March 19, told police he broke into a shop because he wanted to go back to jail.

BLM State Advisory Committee to Meet In Portland Monday

Portland - The bureau of land management's 18-member state advisory board for the Oregon and California Grant Lands will meet in Portland Monday, May 6, at the BLM state office, Director Russell E. Getty has announced.

Two members from the Medford district, Eric W. Allen Jr., and Mrs. Edward C. Kelly plan to attend.

The board, headed by former Gov. Charles A. Sprague, will discuss with the BLM the emergency timber salvage program in western Oregon, possible changes in timber measurement methods on sal-

vage sales, and revised timber sale regulations for the O and C. Some of the current issues involving the O and C may be discussed, Getty said.

More Than Allowable Cut
About 1.5 billion board feet of timber was blown down on the 2.2 million acre O and C forest during the Columbus Day storm. This is more than a full year's normal allowable cut. Last November, BLM launched an intensive salvage program to get the blowdown cleaned up and out of the woods by the spring of 1964.

Last week the bureau reported that 300,436,000 board feet of storm damaged timber

had been sold and another 978,489,000 board feet of salvage and intermingled green timber was ready for sale.

A committee to investigate the two principal methods of measuring timber for sale, timber cruising and log scaling, and determine which could be better applied to the BLM timber salvage program on the O and C was appointed at the last advisory board meeting in January.

To Report Findings
The committee is headed by Darrell Jones, Clackamas county commissioner, and president of the Association of O and C counties. The com-

mittee will report its findings at the Monday meeting, according to Getty.

Most BLM timber is sold by tree measurement or timber cruising. Such sales are commonly referred to as lump-sum sales because all of the

merchantable timber is paid for in advance. The other common method of selling timber is by log scaling. This involves the measurement of the timber as it is removed from the sale, and the timber is paid for as it is removed.

Scaling, however, is used in cases where the timber is severely damaged or defective.

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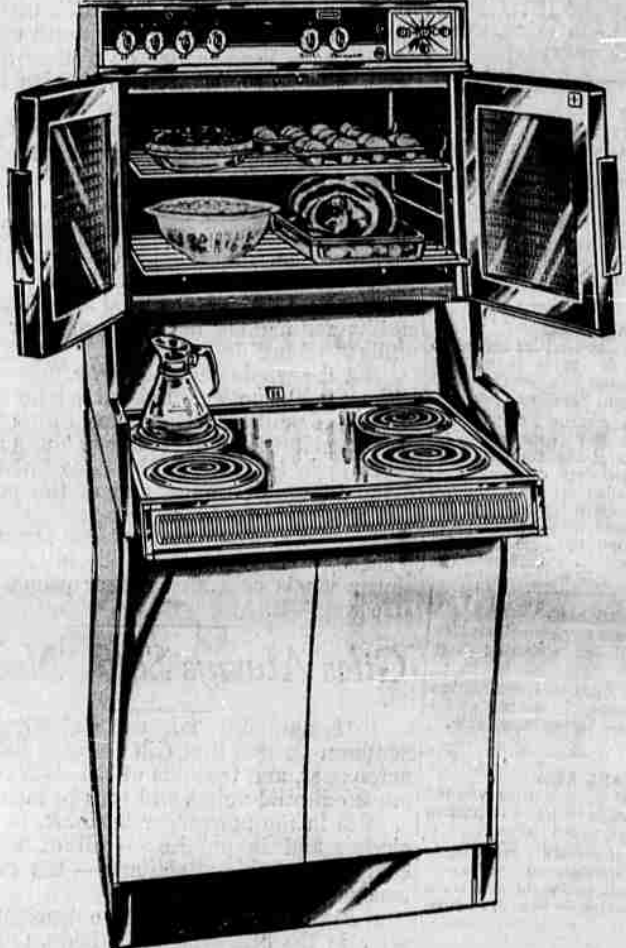
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