

The Medical Roundup

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Lindau's Rare Disease

Some splendid work has been done on the heredity of Lindau's rare disease in which tumors and little cysts (tiny bags of fluid) appear in the eyes, the brain, and some other organs. The work was done by Dr. Jack Goodman, Dr. F. C. Peck Jr., and Emil J. Kleinholtz of the Albany Medical Center Hospital. When these doctors became interested in the disease, they started tracking down all of the uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, and nieces that they could hear of in a family of people, a few of whom had become blind, or who had died of a brain tumor.

To get the needed information, the doctors looked up records in hospitals, in county court houses, in family Bibles, in church and cemetery records, in the archives of historical societies, and in old newspapers. They got in touch with several old family doctors who had known members of the affected family, and along the way, they became skillful genealogists.

They even tracked down one old member of the family with the help of a bartender who knew her. To me this genealogic technic is a delightful and most useful way of studying a rare disease which is not well understood—particularly in its milder and poorly recognizable forms.

Years ago, I had the pleasure of doing this sort of work when I studied what actually happened to 873 families, in all of which there was a tendency to mental troubles, alcoholism, severe neuroses, and epilepsy. My book on the subject is called "Practical Leads to Puzzling Diagnoses: Neuroses that Run Through Families" (Lippincott).

I found in my work exactly what Dr. Goodman and his associates have found in their work, namely that often a tendency to a disease will show up in different members of a family in different ways; in some the disease will be severe, while in others it will be so mild as to be unrecognizable, except to an expert.

Dr. Goodman and his men succeeded in tracing 200 persons in seven generations of the affected family, and found how the disease had affected some of the members. Thirteen of those with the disease were descendants of one woman.

Because among the descendants of the sister of this woman there were eight people in three generations with cataracts in both eyes, cataracts almost certainly can represent a manifestation of Lindau's disease.

Usually in persons with this disease, the people have several aneurysms, or little tumors made of blood vessels. Some had these tumors in the brain; one had one in the spinal cord; three had them in a kidney; and two had the disease show up in their skin.

The great advantage of recognizing a familial disease early in life is that often then it can be treated and cured or relieved. Later, it may be inoperable or hard to treat.

As I have mentioned in this column, one of the studies like this one of Dr. Goodman and his group is that of Dr. Geoffrey Dean, of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, who, in studying the inheritance of porphyria (a disease in which there usually are spells of great nervousness with abdominal pain, red urine, and great sensitivity of the skin to sunlight) has now traced every person (with this abnormality) in seven generations—all descended from a certain Hollander who

Heavy Rainfall Causes Flooding

By United Press International
Heavy rains broke droughts and sent flood waters rolling through several western states and in Texas and North Carolina during the week end.

About three feet of flood water poured into the river channels of Duchesne, Utah, Sunday night, causing minor damage. It was the last of the ravaging waters which took one life and caused thousands of dollars of damage.

A diversion dam burst on the North Fork of the Duchesne river about 40 miles north of Duchesne. A 4-year-old boy drowned when the dam burst. He was sleeping when he was swept away by mud and water.

The U.S. Weather Bureau said the heavy week end rains "undoubtedly" broke the two-month drought in eastern Colorado. The rains ranged up to an unofficial five to six inches in Jefferson county.

USEFUL PRIZE

Middletown, Conn. — Edward Kulmacz, 45, who has never owned or operated a car, won one at a week end bazaar.

Highways Get New 'Welcome Mats'

Sixteen highway entrances into Oregon have now been painted at the state borders with the "Welcome to Oregon" green mats that stretch out 152 feet to form a greeting sign for all travelers entering the state. Included are both Highway 99 and 199.

These 16 large welcome mats are located in every area of the state wherever a major highway crosses the border, according to Forrest Cooper, state highway engineer.

Paint crews of the highway department will also paint welcome mats on several other entrances to the state as soon as possible. These

other highways include roads under construction and those in remote areas. All incoming lanes have the "Welcome to Oregon" painted in letters eight feet tall. On the outgoing lanes are letters of the same size stating "Hurry Back."

This is the second year that the Highway Department has painted the welcome mats on state entrances.

Woodburn Youth Dies From Accidental Shot

Woodburn — Jack Herbo, 15, Woodburn, died in a Portland hospital Sunday night from an accidental gunshot wound.

Constitution on Ballot Supported

Portland — The executive board of the Young Democrats of Oregon passed a resolution Sunday supporting a move to place the state's proposed new constitution on the 1964 general election ballot.

The executive committee of the Citizens Committee for Constitutional Revision voted Friday to place the document on the ballot by initiative

petition if that method can be used legally in this case.

The Young Democrats resolved to "pledge the efforts of the entire organization to secure signatures . . . if this may be done according to the present constitution."

The proposed constitution failed to get through the 1963 Oregon Legislature by the necessary two-thirds majority. It was passed by the House but failed by three votes in the Senate. Backers then decided to ask Attorney General Robert Y. Thornton for an opinion on the legality of putting it on the ballot by initiative.

Students Named to Dean's Honor List

Two Medford students were named to the dean's list for scholastic achievement at Marylhurst college last semester. Marilyn Martin, sophomore biological science major, and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry E. Martin, 144 South Keene Way dr., and Janet Sterling, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. T. Sterling, 15 Geneva st., both received honors.

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went out to Africa about 1700. An important point is that in this big family there are some lines of descent in which the disease appears, and some lines in which it is absent.

In the last few years, the science of human genetics has shot ahead at such a great rate that I think the conspiracy of silence against it, which for the last 50 years has permitted very little discussion of it by physicians or laymen, must soon collapse. When it is finally overcome, we physicians and many laymen will have to face the obvious but now unpalatable fact that many diseases are primarily hereditary in nature.

Two thirds of the victims of Multiple Sclerosis are between the ages of 20 and 40. If you'd like Dr. Alvarez' little booklet which tells more about the disease, send 25 cents and a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request for it to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MMT, Box 957, Des Moines 4, Iowa.

Your Money's Worth

By SYLVIA PORTER
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POWER OF PENSION FUNDS

Rumor No. 1 circulating over the years: Labor unions have gained great economic power in this country through their management of the pension funds of their members.

Evidence released today: The rumor has been wildly exaggerated. While covering over 3 million workers, union pension funds had assets of only \$1.6 billion in 1960, and even though these funds are growing rapidly, they "will not bulk large as concentrations of financial assets . . ."

Rumor No. 2 circulating over the years: Managers of pension funds shift their investments in response to swings in the economy and the stock market, thus have an immense short-run influence on stock prices.

Evidence released today: Pension fund managers do not respond in any important degree to swings in the economy of the stock market. They buy stocks that are rising in price about as frequently as they buy stocks that are declining in price. Their very structure prevents the funds from switching assets on short notice and they gear their investment policies to long-term objectives.

Rumor No. 3 circulating over the years: Families saving through pension funds cut their saving in other forms—cash, savings accounts, securities, life insurance, equity in a home, etc. This has reduced the pool of savings needed to finance our economic growth.

Evidence released today: The opposite is true. Families covered by pensions save more in other forms for the "realization of retirement needs and of the opportunities to save." The average saving ratio for the main categories of saving in 1960 was 11.5 per cent for families covered by pensions against 7.8 per cent for those not covered.

Among the more significant papers included in the 43rd annual report of the National Bureau of Economic Research, issued today, is a study on the "Economic Aspects of Pensions," under the direction of Roger F. Murray, professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Business. The growth of the federal social security system since the 1930s is a familiar story, of course. The growth of pension plans of private organizations and state and local governments also has been enormous but, as the long-circulating rumors cited above underline, little basic research has been done in this area.

The upsurge in the number of individuals covered by pension programs outside of federal social security has been sensational and the projections for future growth are even more so. In 1960, 26.1 million individuals were covered by private, state and local plans, more than double the total covered as recently as 1950 and dwarfing the 5.5 million covered in 1940. Murray's study estimates that by 1970, 39.8 million will be covered, and by 1980 the total will reach 48.7 million. This, mind you, excludes the tens of millions protected by federal government programs.

The economic-financial power of these pension funds is dramatized by the assets under their control. In 1960, the funds had accumulated assets of \$68.7 billion, up from \$16.8 billion in 1950 and \$4 billion in 1940. The projection is that the funds will have assets of \$173.4 billion by 1970 and \$319.3 billion by 1980.

There is no doubt that pension systems are redistributing income in the United States—from higher-income families to lower-income groups, from younger to older workers, from actively productive members of our society to those who have ceased contributing.

There is no doubt that even though they don't shift with short-run moves in the securities markets, they have a huge and continuing impact on the markets. In the past decade the funds have moved into the stock markets and into mortgages on a multi-billion dollar scale.

Pension funds have become the key factor in the financial independence of tens of millions. They are forcing dynamic changes in the financial marketplace. They are sustaining rather than draining the supply of savings to finance our economic growth. They are a new financial institution, created in this generation, the significance of which we are just beginning to understand.

Hatfield Attacks Recent Legislature

St. Helens — Gov. Mark Hatfield used a safety award ceremony here Saturday as a forum to lash out again at the 1963 Oregon Legislature.

He told sawmill workers, managers and their wives at the Pope and Talbot sawmill plant here that politics caused what he termed the "failure" of the session.

"We can chalk it up to politics that the failure is on the record books—not politics in the noble sense of the world but politics in the ignoble sense," Hatfield said.

The governor presented resident plant manager Harvey Hawkins with a plaque signifying the National Safety Council's highest award, the "Award of Honor."

The plant operated the entire 1962 year without a lost-time accident.

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