

The Medical Roundup

By

Walter Alvarez
 Emeritus Consultant in Medicine
 Mayo Clinic
 Emeritus Professor of Medicine
 Mayo Clinic
 (Register and Tribune Syndicate,
 1962).



Cirrhosis of the Liver
 According to the statistical bulletin of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, each year in this country some 20,000 deaths are caused by cirrhosis of the liver. Most of these deaths comes between the ages of 45 and 64 years. There are half as many cases again in which cirrhosis is a contributory cause of death.

Of late, there has been an increase in the mortality from cirrhosis of the liver, and this may be due to the greater frequency of a severe form of hepatitis (inflammation of the liver). The greater frequency of this type of hepatitis is due probably to the present-day great fondness we doctors have for giving transfusions of blood. In perhaps 30 per cent of the givers of blood, the person carries the virus of serum hepatitis in his body. Strangely, while it does not bother him, it often kills the older person who receives a pint of his blood. In the U. S., in 1961, only about one-third of the deaths from liver cirrhosis were in alcoholics.

Not Necessarily Alcoholics
 Back in 1905, when I was an intern in a big city and county hospital, our impression was that most of the people who had severe cirrhosis were alcoholics, but later it became evident that less than half of the cirrhotics had drunk heavily.

According to the statistics, in spite of all the advances in the surgical treatment of some cirrhotics who tend to bleed severely, plus the use of antibiotics to control the tendency to infections, there has been no definite improvement in the results obtained in the treatment of these patients. The sad fact is that when most of the liver cells have been destroyed, and only fibrous tissues, blood vessels, and bile ducts are left, there is little in the way of a cure that a physician can promise. He cannot build a new liver. One of the sad features of the disease is that many an alcoholic who has been told that more drinking is likely to finish him off, keeps going on benders!

Deaths on the Highway
 In an editorial in the New England Journal of Medicine, I read that in 1962, there was in this country a considerable increase in the number of highway tragedies. The number of deaths reached 40,500, and in addition, 3,345,000 persons were injured. We often forget these 3 1/2 million people who were injured—some of them so terribly that they will never walk or work again.

The commonest cause of these accidents appeared to be too

much speed. This killed nearly 13,000 persons and injured 1,145,000. Noteworthy is the fact that drivers under 25 years of age averaged two accidents to the one that people over 25 did. Worse yet, I have seen insurance statistics which showed that boys of 16 had some three times as many accidents as did boys of ages 17 or 18. Sad is the fact that automobiles killed 7,100 pedestrians in the year, and injured 244,200.

I often think that if we were to read somewhere 40,500 American soldiers had been killed and 3,345,000 had been wounded, we would all rise up in wrath, and demand that such a disaster never again be permitted to happen; but because the 40,500 were killed—two or three at a time, or even 400 on one week-end holiday—we think little about it, and very rarely do anything to improve matters.

The Tired Housewife
 Every physician with half a century of experience must have a vivid picture of the very tired wife who for years has had a household of children and no maid. No wonder she is tired—with tasks that can never be finished, even when she stays up ironing and sewing on buttons and mending until midnight or later.

Many a time when in the office I have seen a woman all worn out with overwork. I have had to examine her thoroughly to rule out some serious disease. When I could not find any—oh how I would wish that some well-to-do member of the family could set her free for a few weeks to rest and sleep and catch her breath.

I think of these women whenever I read an old epitaph which runs like this:
 "Here lies a poor woman who always was tired; She lived in a house where no help was hired; Don't mourn for me now, don't mourn for me ever, 'I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever.'"

I am sure thousands of my readers will understand, and will sympathize with that poor soul.

What causes high blood pressure? What is normal blood pressure? Why shouldn't you have your blood pressure tested too often? These questions and many more are answered in Dr. Alvarez' booklet, "High Blood Pressure." To obtain your copy send 25 cents and a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MMT, Box 957, Des Moines, Iowa 50304.

Western Oregon Fairly Good Winter Area for Various Kinds of Birds

CORVALLIS—Millions of birds migrate from Oregon to warmer southlands each fall, but lesser numbers (still counted in millions) come to the state from the north for the winter, an Oregon State University zoologist has pointed out.

Western Oregon is a fairly good winter area for waterfowl and some small birds, Storm noted. Starlings overwinter here in tremendous numbers from the Plains States, for example. Most Oregonians would be willing to see them go someplace else, Storm said, because they are becoming a serious nuisance.

Several sea gulls that nest in northlands, such as Alaska, migrate down to the Oregon Coast area, he reported. The common gull of Eastern Oregon also moves to the Coast for the winter. And the common sea gull of the Oregon Coast, the Western gull, stays here all year.

Several Gulls Present
 That means that several kinds of gulls are present on the Oregon Coast during the winter. Only an expert can tell

Second Issue of Journal Published

CORVALLIS—The second issue of the new Oregon State University journal, "Northwest Business Management," will be distributed this week.

The quarterly journal was started in August as a service to owners and managers of small and medium-sized business firms.

Since the first issue was published, the journal has drawn wide attention, according to Jack L. Rettig, assistant professor of business administration who is editor. Subscriptions have come from businessmen throughout the Northwest.

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