

They'll Do It Every Time By Jimmy Hatlo



The Medical Roundup

By

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... was easily accessible in case of need. Ninety per cent of the families interviewed had a doctor or a clinic whom they consulted.

A way that I have often used to find a good general practitioner for friends who have recently moved to some community is to have them write to Mr. Mac Cahal, of the Academy of General Practice (Volker Boulevard at Brookside, in Kansas City, Missouri). The doctors in this group are an unusually fine set of men; every year they have to attend a certain number of "brush-up" lectures and clinics or they lose their membership.

Porphyria
 So many people have written to ask me for a book on porphyria that I'll say here that one was recently published called "Diseases of Porphyrin Metabolism," by A. Goldberg and C. Rimington (Chas. A. Thomas of Springfield, Ill. \$9.75). This, of course, is a technical book on the chemistry of the porphyrins, and hence I doubt if a layman, unless he is a biologic chemist, could get much out of it. Before long I hope my good friend, Dr. Geoffrey Dean, of South Africa, will have his book out (Lippincott). In it he has an interesting story to tell of the way in which he traced all of his many patients with the disease to one ancestor who went out to Africa about 1700 A.D.

As I must keep saying, porphyria is a hereditary disease, and hence, when someone finds that he or she has it, he will do his relatives a great service and will save a few lives, if he will write all of them and warn them to be checked to see if they have the malady. If they have, they must be careful never to take a barbiturate, and especially not to take the pentothal sodium, which is now so commonly used as a surgical anesthetic. People with porphyria often get operated on to no purpose because the disease produces abdominal pain.

If they are given pentothal, they can go into an acute attack in which they can go out of their mind, and become so toxic that they can die. In acute spells, persons with porphyria may notice that their urine is red—especially if it has been exposed to much light. Some people with porphyria have a skin so highly sensitive to sunlight that if they go out on a beach, they can get a lot of small ulcers on their arms.

Today, in some well-run hospitals, all persons who are sent in for an operation have their urine tested for an excess of porphyrins. This is the only way in which many lives will be saved.

Heredity of Feeble-mindedness

Probably a high percentage of the parents of a feeble-minded child hate to face the idea that the cause can be hereditary, but according to Professor E. H. Watson of the University of Michigan, an expert on the subject, 60 per cent or even 80 per cent of the children have inherited a tendency to the disease.

Although I know that quoting here the opinions of some of the country's experts on this terribly distressing disease I will make some parents unhappy, I know also from my huge mail that I can bring great comfort and mental relief to thousands of women by assuring them of what is absolutely certain, and this is that they are not responsible in any way for the child's handicap. Hence, they must not go on blaming themselves or perhaps wondering what they did during the pregnancy which might have caused the disaster.

Bob Hope To Make Overseas Junket

SAN FRANCISCO (UPI)—Comedian Bob Hope, 60, will be able to make his annual Christmas tour of overseas military bases, his physician reported Sunday.

The entertainer entered Children's Hospital here last Thursday for treatment of a blood clot in his left eye. There was some fear that the treatments would conflict with the Christmas tour.

The comedian is scheduled to leave Dec. 22 for U.S. military bases in the Mediterranean.

One of the common forms of mental retardation is found in what is called a "mongolian" child. Today, expert geneticists, after studying body cells from the parents, can tell us exactly what went wrong. And it went wrong at the time of conception; hence the mother must not blame herself.

For Parents of Children With Speech Difficulties

As I often say here, the parents of children with speech difficulties should know that many schools have speech-correctionists on their staffs. If the local school does not have such remedial speech services, the parent can obtain information about speech clinics in his area by writing to the nearest university or to the American Speech and Hearing Assn., 1001 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

How to Choose a Family Doctor

I was just reading an article by John L. Bach, of Chicago, in the "New Physician" the excellent journal published for medical students. Dr. Bach tells of a questionnaire given to 350 mothers in Wisconsin. The interviewers wanted to learn how the women would go about finding a family physician when one was needed. One in two of the mothers said that their first question about a doctor was, "Would he make house calls when necessary?" Thirty-four per cent of the women said they had chosen their physician on the recommendation of friends, neighbors, and others. Twenty per cent had chosen him on the recommendation of a doctor or a person working in public health, and 16 per cent had chosen a doctor because his office was easily accessible in case of need.

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