

Medico-Legal

FATAL OVERDOSE OF PENICILLIN

The death of a 9-year-old boy from an overdose of penicillin was the subject of an inquest held at Ryde, Isle of Wight, on October 14. The child, John Woods, had been healthy until midday on September 17. He then vomited and was generally unwell. The following day he developed a headache, vomited bile, and took no food. He was admitted to the Royal Isle of Wight County Hospital, where the house-surgeon, Dr. F. R. F. Dibb, examined him after keeping him under observation until early evening. The examination showed that the child had photophobia and was unable to raise his head. Dr. Dibb reported to the duty surgeon, Mr. G. Walker, that the child had some irritation of the brain and nervous system. Mr. Walker suggested a lumbar puncture on the child, and ordered some penicillin to be given intrathecally. Giving evidence, Dr. Dibb said that the lumbar puncture was performed at 9 p.m., and he asked Nurse Patricia Cunningham, a trainee nurse in charge of the ward, to prepare an injection of 100,000 units of penicillin. Dr. Dibb explained that he did not check the amount, as was general medical routine, because he was anxious to inject quickly in case the child moved. Twenty minutes after he left the ward he was told the child was convulsed and also had a breath-holding attack. Dr. J. H. Moseley, consultant paediatrician, was telephoned for advice. Nurse Cunningham, who had prepared the injection, told Dr. Dibb on his return to the ward that the syringe had contained 500,000 units of penicillin. Mr. Walker was informed. At 1.40 a.m. the child died.

In her evidence Nurse Cunningham said she had been a trainee nurse since February, 1955. At the time she had no doubt about the quantity of penicillin Dr. Dibb had asked for. Later she heard Mr. Walker mention the 100,000 units to Dr. Dibb. She told the night nurse and then Dr. Dibb that she had given 500,000. It was the first time she had prepared an intrathecal injection, and only afterwards heard that it was customary to check them. Hospital regulations covered dangerous drugs; these did not apply to penicillin.

The pathologist, Dr. P. D. Swinstead, said the cause of death was asphyxia due to convulsions, and that the convulsions were produced by intrathecal penicillin. The cerebrospinal fluid was normal, and no conclusion could be reached about the child's primary illness.

The coroner, Mr. J. V. Bullin, recorded a verdict of "death from misadventure." The jury expressed the view that a fully qualified nurse should always be available for intrathecal injections.

Universities and Colleges

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

In Congregation on October 11 it was resolved to confer the degree of M.A. on Surgeon Rear-Admiral James Hamilton, C.B., C.B.E., Director of Postgraduate Medical Studies.

R. V. Coxon, M.D., D.Phil., F.R.C.S., Reader in Human Physiology in the University, has been elected to a Professorial Fellowship at Exeter College.

In Congregation on October 13 the degree of B.M. was conferred on R. G. Bannister and D. Staig.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

At a Graduation Ceremony held on October 26 the degree of M.D. was conferred, with honours, on N. S. Clark and A. D. Morgan.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

The following candidates at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine have been approved at the examination indicated:

ACADEMIC POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC HEALTH.—C. Cywinski, P. Nadarasa, M. I. Varkki.

The following candidates have been approved at the examinations indicated:

ACADEMIC POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CLINICAL PATHOLOGY.—R. P. Agrawal, C. de V. Bevan, Ethel A. V. Brooks, I. Chanarin, P. J. Dawson, L. W. Duchon, J. C. B. Fenton, J. S. Gordon, M. U. Henry, T. P. S. Mulligan, C. de S. Muthucumarana, J. Rusius, K. Shanmugaratnam, R. W. Snyder, P. J. Stevens, R. C. Taylor.

EXTERNAL DIPLOMA IN CLINICAL PATHOLOGY.—R. R. Chaudhuri, Hla Thein, S. O. Waller, D. C. Walter.

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

In Congregation on September 27 the following degrees were conferred:

M.D.—J. Parkhouse.

M.B., Ch.B.—R. B. Crosbie.

The following candidates have been approved at the examination indicated:

FINAL M.B., Ch.B.—Part I: A. Animashaun, P. Arrowsmith, Vera J. Capey, P. S. Carter, R. P. Coates, R. F. Davies, R. Dittman, J. O. Lavelle, R. F. Sowerby, P. Williams, W. C. Wooldridge.

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

The following candidates have been approved at the examinations indicated:

M.D.—G. Holti, D. H. Miller.

M.B., Ch.B.—M. M. Akal, J. H. Binns, Muriel A. Boyd, M. H. Carr, D. J. Godfrey, D. Hainsworth, F. R. Halmshaw, J. M. Hulme, J. B. Hunting, R. C. Laverick, A. L. Lawrence, T. C. E. Mbanefo, V. S. Naiken, S. M. Rosen, W. Sawyer, D. C. Senior, Margaret J. D. Sturges, E. U. Ukpong, J. L. Wilkinson.

DIPLOMA IN PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE.—A. Aronson, E. P. Cadogan, Agnes D. Collins.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS

At a meeting of the Council of the College held on September 24, with the President, Sir Arthur Gemmell, in the chair, J. B. Fleming was admitted to the Fellowship.

The following were admitted to the Membership:

H. McK. G. Agnew, M. M. Baskin, L. Bhose, M. L. Bloom, A. G. Bond, E. P. Campbell, Tuck Kwong Chong, Mary G. Coyle, J. A. Holmes, M. Konar, J. D. C. Lyons, J. MacVicar, Chiew Seng Oon, Mary Phillips, I. Rucker, J. P. Roux, A. H. Rowson, S. Davies, J. R. Saunders, Muriel J. Scudamore, H. G. I. Shanks, C. D. Smith, R. McN. Thomson, R. F. Zacharin.

Vital Statistics

Industrial Accidents and Diseases

The number of workpeople (other than seamen) in the United Kingdom whose deaths from accidents in the course of their employment were reported in September was 136, compared with 112 (revised figure) in the previous month and 146 in September, 1954.

The numbers of cases of industrial diseases in the United Kingdom reported during September, 1955, were as follows: lead poisoning 10, aniline poisoning 1, mercurial poisoning 1, phosphorus poisoning 2, epitheliomatous ulceration 18, chrome ulceration 11; total 43. There was one death due to epitheliomatous ulceration from mineral oil.—*Ministry of Labour Gazette*, October, 1955.

Poliomyelitis

In the week ending October 22 the total number of cases of acute poliomyelitis in England and Wales decreased by 19, though the paralytic cases increased by 21. The figures for the week (with those for the previous week in parentheses) were: paralytic 210 (189), non-paralytic 137 (177), total 347 (366). Deaths in the great towns numbered 10. Notifications from the beginning of the year up to October 22 numbered 5,701. In 1947 and 1950, the only two years in which they have been more numerous, they numbered 7,747 and 7,304 respectively.

The incidence of the disease increased in the north-midland and south-western regions, and the East and West Ridings. It decreased in the northern, eastern, London and south-eastern, southern, and midland regions and in Wales; no change was recorded in the north-western region. The following districts have had particularly high rates to date

Faculty of Radiologists.—A postgraduate week-end course on diagnostic radiology and radiotherapy will be held at the Royal College of Surgeons on November 19 and 20. Applications for enrolment (fee 12s. 6d.) must be in the hands of the secretary, Faculty of Radiologists, 45, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.2, by November 12.

College of General Practitioners.—The second James Mackenzie Lecture will be delivered by Dr. G. O. BARBER on "Medical Education and the General Practitioner" on Saturday, November 19, at 11.30 a.m. in the Great Hall, B.M.A. House. A symposium on "The Position of the General-Practitioner Obstetrician To-day" will be held at the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London, W.C.1, on Sunday, November 20, at 10 a.m. Opening speakers: Dr. E. B. HICKSON, "Obstetrics in a General Practice"; Professor W. C. W. NIXON, "The General-Practitioner Obstetrician and the Hospitals"; and Mr. A. J. WRIGLEY, "The Place of the General-Practitioner Obstetrician in the Maternity Service as a Whole." Visitors will be welcome on both occasions.

London Varicose Clinic.—Anniversary clinical meeting, November 24 at 8.15 p.m. Dr. STANLEY RIVLIN will read a paper on "The Approach to the Ulcerated Leg," and there will be films and clinical demonstrations. Refreshments at 10 p.m. Doctors wishing to attend should write to the secretary, London Varicose Clinic, 14, York Road, London, S.W.11.

NEW ISSUES

British Journal of Preventive and Social Medicine.—The new issue (Vol. 9, No. 3) is now available. The contents include:

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF THE DISABILITIES OF THE ELDERLY WITH THE AID OF AN ELECTRONIC CALCULATOR. John Maddison, R. C. F. Smith, and O. Olbrich.

VITAL STATISTICS OF THE COUNTY OF LONDON IN THE YEARS 1901 to 1951. W. J. Martin.

STATISTICAL EXPERIMENTATION IN THERAPEUTICS. Raymond Wrigton. COMPARATIVE EFFICACY OF HYPNOTICS. A SELF-CONTROLLED, SELF-RECORDED CLINICAL TRIAL IN NEUROTIC PATIENTS. E. H. Hare.

SOCIAL MEDICINE STUDIES BASED ON CIVILIAN MEDICAL BOARD RECORDS. IV. OCCUPATIONAL AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN WITH CERTAIN DIGESTIVE DISORDERS. A. M. Stewart, J. W. Webb, and D. Hewitt.

BODY MEASUREMENTS OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN. W. H. Hammond. A NOTE ON THE OBSTETRIC EFFECTS OF WORK DURING PREGNANCY. Alice Stewart.

CHANGING PATTERN OF MORTALITY IN ENGLAND AND WALES. III. MORTALITY IN OLD AGE. Wallis Taylor and Marjorie Dauncey.

Issued quarterly; annual subscription £2 2s.; single copy 12s. 6d.; obtainable from the Publishing Manager, B.M.A. House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

SOCIETIES AND LECTURES

A fee is charged or a ticket is required for attending lectures marked ●. Application should be made first to the institution concerned.

Monday, November 7

LONDON UNIVERSITY.—At King's College, 5.30 p.m., special university lecture by Professor C. Sadron (Strasbourg): Morphology of Large Chain Molecules.

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF LONDON.—4 p.m., Dr. Dermot MacCarthy: Hypertension in Childhood.

SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES OF LONDON.—4.30 p.m., Dr. R. S. F. Schilling: Byssinosis; 5.45 p.m., Dr. A. J. Amor: Industrial Hazards.

Tuesday, November 8

BRITISH POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL FEDERATION.—At London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 5.30 p.m., Dr. O. G. Edholm: Effects of Cold on Man.

INSTITUTE OF DERMATOLOGY.—5.30 p.m., Dr. R. H. Meara: Skin Testing.

●INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGY.—5.30 p.m., Dr. M. J. F. McArdle: Facial Pain.

MANCHESTER MEDICAL SOCIETY.—At Manchester University, 8 p.m., Section of Surgery. Mr. H. R. Thompson: Anal Fissures and Fistulae.

●OXFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SOCIETY.—At Radcliffe Infirmary, 8.15 p.m., Dr. H. M. Sinclair: Untrodden Paths in Physiology: Laughter and Yawning.

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL MEDICAL SCHOOL.—At Wright-Fleming Theatre, 5 p.m., Mr. W. Hawksworth: Clinical Value of X-ray Pelvimetry.

WEST END HOSPITAL FOR NEUROLOGY AND NEUROSURGERY.—5.30 p.m., Mr. G. C. Knight: Diagnosis of Spinal Compression.

Wednesday, November 9

COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS.—At Worcester Royal Infirmary, 3.30 p.m., Dr. J. O. Terry: Diabetes and the Newer Insulins.

HARVEIAN SOCIETY OF LONDON.—8.15 p.m., Sir Stanford Cade and Dr. Gwen Hilton: Results of Radiotherapy in the Treatment of Cancer.

INSTITUTE OF DERMATOLOGY.—5.30 p.m., Dr. H. Haber: Squamous Cell Epithelioma.

INSTITUTE OF DISEASES OF THE CHEST.—5 p.m., Mr. O. S. Tubbs: Mitral Valvotomy.

INSTITUTE OF ORTHOPAEDICS.—8 p.m., Professor R. I. Harris (Toronto): Syme's Amputation.

INSTITUTE OF UROLOGY.—4.30 for 5 p.m., Dr. A. R. Harrison: Tests of Renal Function.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY.—At Radcliffe Infirmary, 5 p.m., Litchfield Lecture by Professor Carl Semb (Norway): Partial Resection of the Kidney. Anatomical, Surgical, and Physiological Aspects.

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF LONDON.—2 p.m., Dr. L. P. R. Fourman: Salt and Water Metabolism.

ROYAL FACULTY OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF GLASGOW.—5 p.m., Burns Lecture by Professor J. B. Kinmonth: Surgery and Investigation of Lymphatic Disease.

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HYGIENE.—3.30 p.m., Major-General B. K. Young: Accidents—Are They Really Necessary?

ROYAL SOCIETY OF TROPICAL MEDICINE AND HYGIENE, EDINBURGH BRANCH.—At West Medical Theatre, Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, 5 p.m., Dr. Frederick J. Wrigat: Brucellosis Past, Present, and Future.

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL MEDICAL SCHOOL.—At Wright-Fleming Theatre, 5 p.m., Dr. J. W. Todd: Lecture-demonstration in psychiatry.

ST. MARYLEBONE HOSPITAL FOR PSYCHIATRY AND CHILD GUIDANCE.—5.30 p.m., Dr. B. G. Parsons-Smith: Value of the Electroencephalogram in Clinical Psychiatry.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON.—At Physiology Theatre, 5.30 p.m., special university lecture by Professor S. Härtstadius (Uppsala): On the Determination of the Bilateral Symmetry in the Sea-urchin Egg.

Thursday, November 10

ALFRED ADLER MEDICAL SOCIETY.—At 11, Chandos Street, W., 8 p.m., Dr. J. C. Sawle Thomas: Psychiatric Administration.

BRITISH POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL FEDERATION.—At London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 5.30 p.m., Dr. A. C. Dornhorst: Physiology of Lower Oesophagus and Cardia.

GLASGOW UNIVERSITY MEDICO-SURGICAL SOCIETY.—7.30 p.m., Professor D. F. Cappell: Developmental Precocity.

GUTHRIE SOCIETY.—At Meyerstein Lecture Theatre, Westminster Hospital Medical School, 8 p.m., Dr. C. Keith Simpson: Crime and the Doctor.

HONYMAN GILLESPIE LECTURES.—At University New Buildings, Teviot Place, Edinburgh, 5 p.m., Dr. C. R. S. Jackson: The Ageing Eye.

●INSTITUTE OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY.—3 p.m., Professor A. M. Clave: Dyspareunia.

LIVERPOOL MEDICAL INSTITUTION.—At Broadgreen Hospital, 2.30 p.m., afternoon clinical demonstration.

●LONDON MARRIAGE GUIDANCE COUNCIL.—At 39, Queen Anne Street, W., 7 p.m., Dr. J. F. Tuthill: Physiological Treatment of Impotence.

●NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE, Wingfield-Morris Orthopaedic Hospital, Oxford, 8.30 p.m., Professor J. Trueta: Considerations on the Present Treatment of Skeletal Tuberculosis.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON.—5 p.m., Bradshaw Lecture by Dr. D. J. Williams: Emotions Arising in Epileptic Attacks.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.—5 p.m., Moynihan Lecture by Professor L. Deloyers (Brussels): Description and Justification of a New Curative Operation for Peptic Ulcer—Reversed Gastrectomy.

ROYAL EYE HOSPITAL.—5.15 p.m., Dr. T. H. Whittington: Aspects of Refraction (5). Myopia and Myopic Patients.

ST. ANDREWS UNIVERSITY.—At Physiology Department, Queen's College, Dundee, 5 p.m., Professor H. G. Callan, D.Sc.: Structure of Chromosomes.

ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL MEDICAL SCHOOL.—5 p.m., Sir W. P. Mallinson: postgraduate demonstration in psychiatry.

SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES OF LONDON.—4.30 p.m., Sir Clement Price Thomas: Surgical Treatment of Pulmonary Tuberculosis; 5.45 p.m., Mr. J. C. Hoyle: Medical Treatment of Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

Friday, November 11

●INSTITUTE OF DERMATOLOGY.—5.30 p.m., clinical demonstration by Dr. H. J. Wallace: Eczema.

INSTITUTE OF DISEASES OF THE CHEST.—5 p.m., clinical demonstration by Sir Clement Price Thomas.

OSLER CLUB OF LONDON.—At 7, Albemarle Street, W., 8.15 p.m., "Hobbies Evening" in honour of Sir D'Arcy Power (November 11, 1855-1941). Speakers: Mr. W. R. Le Fanu, Dr. A. W. Franklin, Dr. C. E. Newman, Dr. C. G. Teall, Mr. N. M. Matheson, and Mr. W. J. Bishop.

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF LONDON.—(1) 2 p.m., Mr. J. A. C. Fleming: Irradiation Injuries in Clinical Practice. (2) 4 p.m., Dr. J. B. Gaylor: Problem of Facial Pain.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF EDINBURGH.—5 p.m., John Matheson Shaw Lecture by Dr. C. A. H. Watts: Neuroses in General Practice.

●SOCIETY FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S.S.R.—8 p.m., film and lecture: Soviet Psychology To-day.

Saturday, November 12

●INSTITUTE OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY.—11.15 a.m., Professor I. Donald: Pitfalls in Forceps Delivery.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS

BIRTHS

Holmes.—On September 19, 1955, at the Western General Hospital, Edinburgh, to Doreen, wife of Dr. Roy Holmes, a daughter.

Penney.—On October 19, 1955, to Belinda (formerly Rudd), wife of G. St. John Penney, M.B., B.Chir., D.C.H., of Bishop's Castle, Shropshire, a son—Adrian Peter St. John.

Tighe.—On October 14, 1955, to Nora (formerly Cregan), wife of Dr. J. R. Tighe, of 101, Ashted Row, Birmingham, a son—Michael Anthony.

DEATHS

Adamson.—On October 5, 1955, in a hospital, Hove, Oswald John William Adamson, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., of 24, Cromwell Road, Hove, Sussex.

Hickey.—On September 24, 1955, Walter Hickey, M.B., Ch.B., of The Close, Bentinck Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, aged 84.

Neal.—On October 2, 1955, John Barker Neal, T.D., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.C.P., Colonel, R.A.M.C., of 8, Hampshire Cross, Tidworth, Wilts, aged 43.

Noble.—On September 27, 1955, Alexander Noble, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., D.T.M.&H., of 196, Upper Clapton Road, London, E.

Wise.—On September 29, 1955, at Morden, Surrey, Walter Frederick Wise, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., aged 81.

Woodford.—On October 2, 1955, at Holly Lodge, Abingdon, Berks, Edward Vivian Russell Woodford, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., aged 85.