

Letters, Notes, and Answers

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS

Prophylactic Vaccine against Puerperal Septicaemia

"T. K. K." writes: Could anyone inform me whether the injections of suitable doses of staphylococcus and streptococcus (polyvalent) vaccine with a view to avoiding any possible danger of puerperal septicaemia have ever been given during any period in pregnancy. Is it or is it not possible materially to lower the even small chance of puerperal septicaemia through these injections? What are the best time and the dangers of this procedure?

** We have submitted this inquiry to Dr. Leonard Colebrook (Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital), who states: I am not aware that a polyvalent vaccine of staphylococcus and streptococcus has been employed for the prevention of puerperal fever, and I think inclusion of the staphylococcus would hardly be worth while, inasmuch as there is so little puerperal infection caused by that microbe. Polyvalent vaccines of streptococci alone have been used on a considerable scale in Germany by Jotten and Maroudis, and by Louros in Athens, and also to some extent in America (Lash), and each writer has claimed some advantage from their use as judged by statistical analysis. Personally I do not think the claims are very convincing. My colleague Dr. Hare, of the Bernhard Baron Memorial Research Laboratories, has done a great deal of work in an attempt to put preventive vaccination on a more satisfactory basis, but the outlook is not very hopeful because of the multiplicity of streptococcal types causing these infections: it seems that protection against one type is unlikely to protect against others. If preventive inoculation were attempted, it should, I think, be done in the last four weeks of pregnancy, but until we have a more satisfactory scientific basis for it I do not think it worth while. For further references see Maroudis (*Munch. med. Woch.*, 1923, lxx, 727) and Jotten (*Arch. f. Gynäk.*, 1917, cvii, 59).

Medical Book-keeping

"M.B., Ch.B." writes, with reference to Dr. W. H. Rowthorn's note (December 9th, 1933, p. 1102), to inquire when the article on simple methods of book-keeping, by Dr. Rowthorn, appeared in the *British Medical Journal*.

** We find that it was as long ago as January 5th, 1901 (p. 44).

Income Tax

Removal—Double Rent

"D. D." had to remove from a house rented at £62 10s. per annum owing to the expiration of a lease at March 25th, 1933. To provide an alternative he purchased the lease of another house in October, 1932, and commenced occupation there as from January 28th, 1933. The new premises are rated at £85 per annum net, and there is a ground rent of £20. Can he deduct the rent of both properties as from the date on which the second house was

purchased? Both houses are used exclusively for professional purposes.

** It was decided fairly recently that a company which vacated some premises before the lease expired was entitled to deduct the rent paid for the subsequent period though they were not in occupation (Commissioners of Inland Revenue *v.* The Falkirk Iron Co., Ltd.). That decision seems to cover the deduction of the rent of the old premises from January 28th to March 25th, 1933. The position with regard to the new premises is somewhat different. "D. D." is entitled to treat the amount on which he pays income tax under Schedule A (probably £85 or thereabouts) as if it were rent paid by him; but presumably no tax was charged on "D. D.'s" ownership of the lease until he came into occupation on January 28th, so no right of deduction for prior periods would arise. The ground rent is not a legal deduction, because "D. D." is recouped for the tax on it by deducting the standard rate tax from his payments as and when he makes them.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

Herpes Generalisatus

Dr. J. NEWBERRY FERGUSON (York) writes, with reference to the note by Professor J. A. Nixon published last week: I have seen two cases of this interesting condition in which a rash like that of chicken-pox appears in the course of an attack of herpes zoster. The first, of which I have no details, occurred in a female aged 46, whom I saw with a colleague, and the second in a patient of my own, a boy of 14. In the latter the "chicken-pox" showed on the fourth day after the herpes, and the illness was fairly severe for some days. It would appear that the condition is not confined to the elderly, as Professor Nixon's series of cases would seem to suggest. It is briefly referred to in "Osler," and ought to be better known.

Driving in Fog

For the guidance of those driving motor vehicles at night and in foggy weather the Automobile Association, with the co-operation of the Postmaster-General, has erected over 2,000 reflex disks on telegraph poles along important main roads. These disks, together with the familiar safety posts, reflect the light from head-lamps of vehicles by showing a red light when mounted on the near-side of the road, and a white light when on the off-side: thus they clearly indicate a safe course for night traffic. Since by far the greatest number of lights which motorists see on the open road after dark and in fog are the red rear-lamps and white head-lamps of other vehicles, the A.A. suggests this simple rule of the road for night driving: "Pass to the right of a red light and to the left of a white light." A number of highway authorities have extended this principle to cover the lighting of temporary road obstructions, but uniformity throughout the country is needed. Pulling up on the off-side of the road after dark is frequently a source of danger, as the side and rear lights cause confusion, particularly in foggy or "dirty" weather. Motorists are urged to avoid this practice, which is deprecated in the Highway Code.

Corrigendum

In the fourth line of Dr. D. F. Anderson's note on heartburn in pregnancy in last week's issue (p. 1231), "hyperchlorhydria," through a misprint, appeared instead of "hypochlorhydria."

Two x-ray film changes are announced by Kodak Limited. The "dupli-tized" film is now supplied on a safety (cellulose acetate) base at the same prices as on the standard (nitrate) base. The other new feature is the introduction of a blue base for Kodak safety x-ray film.

The Warner calendar diary of medical history for 1934 is now being distributed to those members of the profession who have asked for a copy. Messrs. William K. Warner and Co., Ltd. (300, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1) inform us that a further limited number is available for distribution to doctors who apply to them.

Vacancies

Notifications of offices vacant in universities, medical colleges, and of vacant resident and other appointments at hospitals, will be found at pages 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, and 49 of our advertisement columns, and advertisements as to partnerships, assistantships, and locumtenencies at pages 50 and 51.

A short summary of vacant posts notified in the advertisement columns appears in the *Supplement* at page 7.