

Letters, Notes, and Answers

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS

Special Stethoscope

"M." writes from Ireland: I shall be grateful to any member who has had experience in the use of a stethoscope, aided by electricity or otherwise, intended for a physician whose hearing is somewhat impaired for auscultation if he will give me advice on the subject of choosing one.

Excessive Smoking

"H. M. S. T." (in reply to "R. R.," July 1, p. 50) writes: Although the connexion between smoking and duodenal ulcer is generally accepted, it is as well to ascertain whether the excessive cigarette smoking frequently met with in these patients is not, to a great extent, an indication of the nervous temperament which constitutes one of the outstanding features of the "duodenal diathesis." In my experience this is often the case, and for many years I have based my treatment on the recognition of an underlying or associated neurosis. In fact I am beginning to doubt whether smoking *per se* really deserves the importance, as a causative factor, generally accorded to it. Admittedly there are cases in which a vicious circle may be set up. Assuming that the diagnosis of duodenal ulcer is correct—and it is by no means always so, even when the symptoms appear to be conclusive—I would suggest the use of sedatives such as potassium bromide or luminal. A combination I often use is pulv. bismuthi co., 5j, pot. brom., gr. x-xx, tinct. bellad., m v-xv, aq. ad 3j, every four hours before each alternate feed. It is important to watch the patient's tolerance of belladonna. Every possible effort should also be made to discover and eliminate worries and anxieties of all kinds—domestic, business, mental, and physical. Three or four cigarettes a day, smoked in a long cigarette-holder provided with an ample cotton-wool filter, which should be changed with each cigarette, do no possible harm if taken after a feed preceded by the above mixture.

"T. H. W." writes: From personal experience I beg to state that the craving for a smoke after meals has been entirely cured by washing out the mouth carefully after meals and, when this has been completed, swallowing a mouthful of cold water. The only drawback to this plan seems to be that the craving to cleanse the mouth becomes almost as troublesome as the craving for a smoke, and not so easy to satisfy, at times.

Income Tax

Expenses of Car, etc.

"G. W." inquires whether there is any recognized mileage allowance for car expenses, or any generally accepted ratio

between total expenses (or costs of drugs and instruments) and total turnover.

** The majority of practitioners keep a record of garage accounts, occasional purchases, etc., in order to claim the correct deduction, and the Revenue authorities are presumably concerned to see that in other cases any estimates do not err on the generous side. "G. W." is unlikely to obtain a higher rate than 4d. a mile. We cannot suggest any recognized ratio between gross earnings and expenses. The circumstances of practices differ so widely that such a rule-of-thumb method of calculating income-tax liability is not applicable.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

Oestradiol for Rheumatoid Arthritis

Dr. J. T. WOODHEAD (Acomb, York) writes: I have to report an interesting phenomenon which demands some clinical research. Having had some success in a woman with rheumatoid arthritis, using oestradiol (progynon B oleosum forte), I decided to try it on a man suffering from the same complaint. The results were dramatic. From the second injection pain was reduced and swelling and stiffness disappeared rapidly. I then took the worst case of rheumatoid arthritis in my practice: a man who could hardly walk about but who managed to drag himself to work daily with great difficulty. He could not put on his coat alone owing to the stiffness of his shoulders. He was given 25,000 international benzoate units of progynon B oleosum twice weekly for two weeks and 10,000 units twice weekly for a further two weeks. At the end of the first week he could put on his coat alone and he was already beginning to walk better. Of course there is a danger of causing enlargement of the prostate gland which must be watched, and it might be advisable to give testosterone at the end of the treatment.

Medical Literature for China

Dr. MARY GILCHRIST writes: The China Medical Aid Committee has recently received an appeal from Dr. Lim of the Chinese Red Cross Training School, at Kweiyang, for medical journals and medical and surgical textbooks for the training school. This training school, in the words of its own report, "is attempting, in the fire of war, to build a firm base for the National Health Service of the new China." The training school co-operates with the Chinese Red Cross, the Army Medical Service Corps, and the National Health Administration. Many of your readers who do not file back issues of their medical journals would doubtless be willing for them to be used in such a cause. May I therefore take this opportunity of appealing through your columns to the profession, both for medical journals (numbers for the past two years would be most welcome) and for medical textbooks suitable for the training of young doctors, nurses, dressers, and ambulance units. Surgical and first-aid textbooks are most urgently required, but any good recent (within the last five or ten years) textbooks would be most gratefully accepted. Journals and books should be sent to Dr. Joan McMichael, organizing secretary, China Medical Aid Committee, 121, Westbourne Terrace, London, W.2. Journals may be sent monthly, or collected and sent for several months together. All books and journals will be forwarded direct to China, and the British Fund for the Relief of Distress in China, to which we are affiliated, is able to secure free carriage for us.

Sleep Charts: Addendum

Dr. Rudolf's article on sleep charts, which appeared in last week's issue at page 76, was printed without references. As these may be of service to those interested in the subject they are here appended.

REFERENCES

- Laird, D. A. (1931). *Amer. Med.*, **37**, 271.
Stoeckmann, T. (1933). *Münch. med. Wschr.*, **80**, 618.
— (1934). *Ibid.*, **81**, 1353.

Amputations: Corrigendum

An error crept into the last line but four of the last paragraph of the section headed "The Syme Amputation" in Mr. Max Page's article on "Amputations under War Conditions" in the *Journal* of July 8, 1939, p. 78. It should have read "an inch above the ankle" and not "an inch below the ankle."