Letters, Notes, and Answers

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Inn corresponding Schedule D rule. Dr. Tate was a county M.O.H., and claimed to deduct subscriptions to certain professional societies. In his judgment Rowlatt J. said that "taking in professional literature and all that sort of expense which enables a man to keep himself fit for what he is doing are things which can none of them be allowed." This decision seems to cover the purchase of 'books if the income is assessable under Schedule E.

Irrigation in Treatment of Diverticulosis

Dr. BERNARD MYERS (London, W.1) writes: Diverticulosis is not an infrequent condition in older adults, not difficult to diagnose from the train of symptoms and confirmation by x rays. Not only constipation but the tendency to attacks of diarrhea accompanied by accompanying discomfort and pain is apt to cause depression, especially in the more severe cases. From my experience of these cases I suggest that the essentials of treatment are a non-irritating diet free from hips, skins of fruit, or other indigestible material, the daily taking of liquid paraffin in sufficient doses, to promote peristalsis, and to prevent the development of any danger to the patient. This method may cause great discomfort or even pain. I believe that many bad cases need irrigation once a month and possibly more frequently. We should be ready to irrigate the patient complains of no pain or discomfort, but, on the other hand, a feeling of great relief and well-being. It is surprising to see the material removed from a diverticulitis after a careful irrigation. Stirrers from diverticulitis should not strain a need, there should be no need if the dose of paraffin be well regulated.

The Blunt Needle

Mr. A. P. BERTWISTLE, F.R.C.S.Ed. (London) writes: A blunt needle, I am at once on a sound footing and dangerous. The danger is that the needle may break in the tissues, requiring operative removal. A second danger is that it must pass through the tissues more like a saw than a knife. If the needle is obviously rusty micro-organisms may be drawn through the crevices untouched by antiseptics, save those of low surface tension, such as boiling, of course. Hypodermic needles are now made of stainless steel; they become blunt very often by the tip bending backwards, usually over the lumen, and also from excessive use. They can be sharpened with the aid of an oil-stone. Gone are the days when a matchbox was, surreptitiously, used for removing rust. With regard to suture needles, I have the authority of Messrs. Thackray for stating that stainless steel has so far proved unsatisfactory, since it will not harden or temper as well as carbon steel. (In the present emergency they have been asked not to draw on supplies available.) Prof. John Hilton in a broadcast said that safety-razor blades became blunt as the result of an invisible rust forming on the cutting edge, it being impossible to dry the razor perfectly with a towel. If, however, the blade is finally cleaned with a rag moistened with a thin cycle oil it will keep its edge twice as long. Applying this principle to suture needles, if the needle be drawn through a piece of chamot leather impregnated with thin oil several times after use it will be found that the needle keeps sharp much longer, a point of value in these hard times.

Innquirers and Notes, Etc.

In the report supplied to us of the meeting of the Association of Clinical Pathologists held at Cambridge on July 19 and published in the Journal of August 30 (p. 315) Dr. S. C. Dyke is recorded as having made observations on eosinophilia in glandular fever. Dr. Dyke was in fact discussing trichinosis and not glandular fever, and he asks that this correction may be notified to our readers.