

A PILOT PROGRAM FOR CANCER DETECTION IN INDUSTRY

BENJAMIN N. BERG, M.D.

NEW YORK

AT THE present time, the only available method of effectively controlling cancer is early detection of the disease. To encourage the public to have examinations made, 38 states now have one or more cancer detection centers. However, only 24 per cent of the clients at such centers are male. This is the finding of a survey of 125 cancer detection centers made recently by the American Cancer Society.¹ Neither the economic status nor the types of employment of male clients were included in the report.

The preponderance of females requesting examination can largely be attributed to the fact that most women, being housewives, can arrange visits during the day, the only time when the majority of the detection centers are open. Holding sessions at night does not result in a larger percentage of male clients, nor does it take care of females who are employed during the day. The reason is that presumably healthy persons are reluctant, after a day's work, to leave their homes to keep appointments for examinations at clinics.

There is a growing effort to educate the public to make every physician's office a detection center, and physicians have been asked to cooperate in this program. Thus far, however, the results of this approach to the problem have not been encouraging.

Still another plan, one which calls for the utilization of the services of the medical departments in industry, is receiving consideration. In this program, cancer detection examinations are to be made at the place where the majority of employed men and women spend most of their time, that is, at the industrial plant. This plan has been tested at the Ford Instrument Company, a division of the Sperry Corporation, at its plant in Long Island City, N. Y.

Educational literature and posters supplied by the American Cancer Society were distributed throughout the Ford Instrument Company plant. In addition, a film dealing with the detection of cancer was shown both to members of the company's Supervisors' Club, an organization of employees holding positions of administrative or supervisory capacity, and to members of the union local. Supplementary talks were also given to these groups by the plant medical director and the executive director of the Queens County Cancer Committee. During the early

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1. Proceedings of the Conference on Cancer Detection, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, Portsmouth, N. H., September 1949, New York, American Cancer Society, 1950.