

- 947 Low Back Pain in Men Receiving Workmen's Compensation. A.W.M. White.
Can. Med. Assn. J. 95, 50-56 (July 9, 1966).

In Ontario, only about 10% of compensation patients with low back pain are disabled more than six weeks and hence tend to have chronic complaints. Six hundred and twenty-three such patients were studied to determine the distribution of diagnoses and to test the effectiveness of various programs of conservative therapy. Two hundred and thirteen were assigned in rotation to one of four treatments. The results were inconclusive. In 70% of these, the pain was due to intervertebral disc degeneration with added trauma. Two hundred and sixteen patients were assigned randomly to a treatment involving mild exercise, or one with vigorous exercise. Neither was found to be superior. In 76% of these, the pain was due to disc degeneration with added trauma. Using 194 patients, the results of treatment in the Compensation Board Rehabilitation Centre were compared with those obtained by treatment at home. Satisfactory improvement was achieved in 15 of 95 treated at home, and in 42 of 99 at the Centre. The failure of treatment in six of ten cases indicates that present-day methods of management of such patients are unsatisfactory. -- Author's abst.

- 948 Cancer and Appendectomy. J.G.R. Howie and W.R. Timperley.
Cancer 19, 1138-1142 (Aug. 1966).

A recent report based on necropsy material suggested an association between appendectomy and subsequent development of colonic and other cancers. An attempt was made to repeat this observation using live patients; 588 cases of breast cancer, 500 of cervical cancer and 568 of colonic cancer received a circular letter asking about previous appendectomy, tonsillectomy and cholecystectomy. A similar letter was sent to 916 healthy patients. A high percentage of replies was obtained and it was clear that patients with cancer did not have a higher incidence of previous appendectomy than did the control patients. Criticism is made of the experimental design of the original study which might explain the results obtained. The authors conclude that there is no evidence to suggest that appendectomy may predispose to subsequent development of malignant disease. -- Authors' abst.

- 949 Myocardial Infarction and Tobacco Smoking. O. Gsell.
Munch. med. Wochschr. 108, 1210-1220 (June 3, 1966).

Correlations between myocardial infarction and tobacco smoking are pointed out on the basis of 141 cases (including two patients 24 and 25 years of age), seven gross statistical prospective, 17 retrospective investigations in Europe and the United States. In agreement the findings show an unequivocal correlation between smoking and myocardial infarction as well as mortality due to coronary diseases, which existed up to the 60-to 70-year age groups and was very distinct in younger age groups under 50. Myocardial infarction in young adults occurred mostly in heavy smokers, especially in men. Intensive cigarette smoking is not the only, but possibly the main factor in the occurrence of myocardial infarction during the early and middle years.

-- J. Am. Med. Assn. References & Reviews

- 950 Polonium-210 Activity in the Lungs of Cigarette Smokers. B. Rajewsky and W. Stahlhofen.
Nature 209, 1312-1313 (March 26, 1966).

The authors, to further information on the natural radiation burden applied to the human body, investigated the Po-210 content in different parts of the lungs of cigarette smokers and non-smokers. The Po-210 activities found in different parts of the lung tissue are summarized for both groups, and the alpha dose rate in the bronchial epithelium is given. The authors indicate that carcinogenesis caused by inhalation of Po-210 with tobacco smoke is rather unlikely. Eight references are given. -- Public Health Eng. Absts.

- 951 Mycotoxins: Toxic Fungi in Tobaccos. J. Forgacs and W.T. Carll.
Science 152, 1634-1635 (June 17, 1966).

Cigarette, cigar, and pipe tobaccos contain Alternaria spores and dematiaceous mycelia, with cigarette tobaccos being more heavily laden. A smoke aerosol generated from hay on which the fungus had been cultured caused, among other pathologic changes, pulmonary emphysema in mice. -- Authors' abst.

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