

### Newcastle Regional Hospital Board and the United Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals

Two weeks honorary (unpaid) resident attachments in obstetrics for general practitioners are offered by the Newcastle General, Seaham Hall, and Princess Mary Maternity Hospitals, Newcastle upon Tyne, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead, Thorpe Maternity Hospital, Sunderland, Middlesbrough Maternity Hospital, South Tees-side, Bishop Auckland General Hospital, South West Durham, City Maternity Hospital, Carlisle and the West Cumberland Hospital.

Applications should be made to the Assistant Registrar, Postgraduate Office, Medical School, The University, Newcastle upon Tyne.

A course in Industrial Health, arranged by the University, will be held at Newcastle between 5 and 9 July. Applications should be addressed to the Regional Director, Medical School, The University, Newcastle upon Tyne.

### GENERAL PRACTITIONERS' COURSE—CHARING CROSS HOSPITAL

Human Development, 18-19 November 1965

Applications should be made in writing to the Secretary, British Post graduate Medical Federation, 18 Guilford Street, London, W.C.1.

## *Correspondence*

### Doctor's Household (DH) Trial in the Prevention of Bacterial Complications in the Common Cold

Sir,

The results of the 1964-65 DH trial with spiramycin (S), ascorbic acid (A), and the two in association (S+A), based on 112 valid reports sent in by doctors, have been assessed statistically for the College by Dr K. W. Cross. Considerably better results were achieved when treatment was started 1-11 hours after onset of the first symptom, than when started at 1-24+ hours, especially with A. The single criterion adopted was whether the nasal discharge stopped or remained clear during the ten days of observation, or became mucopurulent. The non-purulent cases, aggregated with those of a previous controlled trial with S and A in the same dosage, were:

For treatment started at 1-24+ hours with S+A:	80 per cent of 41 cases
S	: 66 per cent of 71 cases
A	: 55 per cent of 71 cases
For treatment started at 1-11 hours with S+A:	92 per cent of 27 cases
S	: 73 per cent of 31 cases
A	: 67 per cent of 43 cases

The figures were too small to show statistically significant differences except in the case of S+A as against A when treatment was started 1-11 hours from onset. When the figures were compared with those obtained

for the inert placebo, kaolin, in the previous controlled trial (30 per cent non-purulent of 30 cases), they suggested that all three treatments "did some good".

In order to obtain more clear-cut results, a further DH trial is proposed for the season 1965-66, and it is hoped to obtain the co-operation of a much larger number of doctors. Clinically the choice between the agents seems clearly to lie between S+A and S alone. The figures for these will be swelled if A is dropped in the forthcoming trial. [The task of determining statistically whether A has an anti-infective action in the body (probably inferior to that of the antibiotics) must be reserved for the future.] Accordingly, doctors practising in the United Kingdom are invited to take part in a double-blind controlled trial of S+A and S, if they are willing to supervise the effect of these drugs (total dosage of S=2 G.) in persons over 14 years of age in their households, and to return the completed report forms to me. Coded capsules and full instructions for their use will be forwarded to those doctors who send their names and addresses, in BLOCK CAPITALS, to me at Ranmore, Fir Tree Road, Leatherhead, Surrey. Those who took part in the 1964-65 trial need not apply; they will be enrolled automatically, unless I hear from them to the contrary.

Leatherhead.

H. STANLEY BANKS.

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## *Book Reviews*

**Nobel Lectures. Physiology or Medicine. 1942-1962.** Published for The Nobel Foundation. Amsterdam, London, New York. Elsevier Publishing Company. 1964. Pp. xiv+839. Price 160s.

This beautifully produced book contains all the lectures on physiology or medicine delivered between 1942 and 1962 by the laureates in these subjects at the presentation ceremonies in Stockholm before the Swedish Royal family. Physiology and biochemistry dominate the series. Nobel prizes are more often given for work in basic sciences than in applied medicine. The series includes the lectures of Fleming, Florey and Chain on penicillin, Waksman on streptomycin and Kendall, Reichstein and Hench on cortisone; these are the ones which touch clinical medicine most closely. The humility and simplicity of Fleming's lecture is particularly noticeable.

This book is most likely to be read by physiologists, but even they are likely to read a selection only. When subjects so widely scattered are presented in one volume, they cannot all be interesting to any one reader. The fundamental nature of the discoveries described by their authors does not always compensate for the obscurity of some of the presentations to a partly non-technical audience. One wonders if the Swedish Royal family