

FIRST SESSION

Communicable diseases

WELCOME

Dr R. A. B. Rorie, M.D., F.R.C.G.P., D.P.M. (Chairman)

IT is my privilege and pleasure as provost of the East Scotland Faculty of the Royal College of General Practitioners to welcome you to this Symposium. I do so on behalf of our sponsors Messrs Geigy (U.K.) Limited, Pharmaceuticals Division, who, over the past 15 years have done so much to support these postgraduate ventures, and I welcome the opportunity of thanking them for their help. A special welcome must go to our undergraduate colleagues, who have come here to help with and enjoy our meeting. It is also my pleasure to introduce Dame Annis Gillie who is to take the chair this afternoon.

I could spend much time in thanking those who have contributed to this meeting, our team of speakers, our consultants—Dr Jamieson, Dr Morrison Dorward and Dr John Langlands who have done so much on the secretarial side, but time is short and our programme is very full. The subject is 'Communicable diseases', and who better to open the proceedings than one who has occupied chairs in both infectious diseases and public health, Professor Tom Anderson.

Virus diseases in man

Professor T. Anderson, M.D., F.R.F.P.S., F.R.C.P. (Professor of public health)

SO long as man lives in groups—and at the present time our focus of attention is on the family rather than larger groups—he is bound to encounter micro-organisms with which he must come to terms. We need to remind ourselves that whereas the bacterial parasites have a comparatively simple metabolism and are, for that reason, now easily treated we are moving into a period when the main concern will be the virus infections. As a result, there is increasing interest in the cell for this is the ultimate point of virus attack. Getting into the cell in the first place represents quite a feat on the part of the virus, which has to stick itself on to the surface of the cell, then break the cell envelope and without doing too much damage, enter the cell which will supply its metabolic energy. When this process has taken place, the virus to all intents and purposes disappears; it becomes intimately concerned in the metabolism of the cell. After an interval replication of the virus particles will take place. One of two things then happens. Either the virus continues to live in that cell indefinitely, or else there is an explosion of virus particles from the cell, infecting other cells of, or other people in close contact with, the host.

In this paper I want to look at the methods by which viruses enter cells. There are three main ways. First, many respiratory tract infections and, indeed, some skin