

EPIDEMIC OBSERVATION UNIT

A STUDY OF INFLUENZA IN OLD PEOPLE

(Proposed Joint Inquiry by the College of General Practitioners and the Medical Research Councils Committee of Clinical Trials of Influenza and other Respiratory Virus Vaccines.)

It is proposed to carry out a study of the effect which old people can derive from an inoculation of virus vaccine. The inquiry will be in two phases, vaccination being done in autumn 1960.

Phase 1: Doctors taking part will be asked to prepare a complete age and sex register of all patients on their National Health list aged 65 years or over. This would be started as from 1 December 1959 and completed during the next two or three months. They would also be asked to record the date and certified cause of death of every patient in the registered age group (i.e., 65 years or over), which occurred between 1 December 1959 and 31 March 1960.

Phase 2: The same procedure for compiling an age/sex register and for recording the date and cause of death would be required during the winter of 1960 to 1961. In addition all doctors taking part in the inquiry would be invited to state whether they wished to offer influenza vaccination to their old age patients or not, or whether they had no strong preference either way. Those who volunteer to use the vaccine would be expected to vaccinate as high a proportion as possible of their patients in their registered age groups. Supplies of the appropriate influenza vaccine would be provided but only one dose per patient would be given.

It is hoped that as many members and associates of the College as possible will volunteer to take part in this important inquiry.

Those who wish to do so are asked to send their names and addresses at once to:

Dr G. I. Watson, " Corran ", Peaslake, Nr. Guildford, Surrey

stating whether they would wish to use the vaccine or not, or whether they have no preference. Doctors in the last category (no preference) may later be directed to join the vaccinators or non-vaccinators according to the eventual size of these two groups. Those who join the inquiry will be given further details later.