

were 7 stillbirths and 6 neonatal deaths, a rate of 12 per 1,000.

Although the survey forceps-rate for primiparae (12%) is fairly low, only one primipara in 44 had a second stage of 3 hours or more which was not treated by either forceps delivery or episiotomy. It is evident that chloroform is still used extensively in general practice; and that the use of ergometrine at the end of the second stage of labour, with the object of reducing the postpartum haemorrhage and manual removal rates, has not yet been taken up by the majority of general practitioners.

It is hoped, eventually, to publish a complete and detailed account of the findings of this survey. This preliminary report is given because of the long period of time which must inevitably elapse before the final analysis can be completed.

#### REFERENCES

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## Epidemic Observation Unit

### Reported Outbreaks.

There have been several reports of puzzling outbreaks by doctors since the last *Newsletter*.

(1) Dr. L. J. Ison, of Morden, Surrey, reported two cases at the end of October of P.U.O. with meningeal irritation of short duration, one of which had a normal C.S.F. on lumbar puncture.

(2) Dr. R. J. F. H. Pinsent, of Birmingham, reported seeing several cases during October and November in which a varicella like rash occurred in children of four to six years old, most of whom had previously had chicken-pox. The rash lasted for about a week to ten days, the eruption was at first irritating but was not accompanied by any other evidence of illness. The differential diagnosis was from papular urticaria.

(3) Dr. Annis Gillie, of Paddington, W.2., reported having seen seven cases in adults during November and December of enlargement of the lymph glands beginning in the neck, first tonsillar then post-cervical, spreading later to the axillae, then slightly in the femoral group, and—in two cases—noticeably epitrochliar glands as well. Discomfort, not amounting to pain, was present in each case. There was giddiness and nausea in every case of varying degree. There was no fever or C.N.S. abnormalities. In two cases investigated the white cell count was normal and the Paul Bunnell reaction negative. The duration was about two weeks. There were no family contacts. Notice of these cases was sent to

the chairmen of the research committees of the four London faculties.

(4) Dr. G. I. Watson, of Peaslake, has been studying an outbreak of high fever, mild sore throat and tender enlargement of the post-cervical glands, involving more than 30 children in one village school, from one of whom serological evidence of recent infection by a virus of the A.P.C. group was confirmed by Colindale. It is hoped to prepare a further report about this outbreak.

### **Epidemic Winter Vomiting**

Further reports have been received from doctors who have recognised outbreaks of this condition in their practices. Dr. C. J. H. Starey makes the point that it has reappeared in his practice at almost exactly the same time as last year, that more adults than children are being affected and that so far no one who was affected last year has apparently suffered an attack of the disease this year.

Dr. G. I. Watson has been able to trace one further example which may point to the persistence of infectiousness for as long as 48 hours after a typical acute attack:

In a boarding school there were 20—30 cases in the last few weeks of term. On 13th and 14th December R.C., aged 11, and P.C., aged 8, were affected by typical attacks at school and P.C. is reported to have passed a looser-than-normal stool on the 15th and 16th. At 9 a.m. on the 16th they were both fetched from school by their mother, Mrs. C., aged 45, who remained perfectly well until 5 p.m. on the 19th when she suddenly began to feel sick; she vomited violently once at 10 p.m. without any diarrhoea then or subsequently. Within 24 hours she was feeling perfectly well again.

If the illness in Mrs. C. was “winter vomiting,” this points to either P.C. or R.C. as having been infective for at least 48 hours after their own attack commenced.

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### **Respiratory Diseases Study Group**

The investigation into *acute chest infections* is now completed and the results have been analysed. Some very interesting facts have been obtained from the 1507 cards examined. A report is now (December 1955) being prepared and it is hoped to publish this—one of the first of the College's research projects—in the New Year.

Having built up an active group of over 50 members we are hoping to keep this group going by undertaking an investigation into the definition, incidence and course of *chronic bronchitis*. The whole matter is now being actively considered by the College research committee and it is hoped that a start may be made in the next spring or summer.

Would members who are interested in taking part in such a long term study please get in touch with the recorder—Dr. John Fry, of 36, Croydon Road, Beckenham, Kent.