

News and Notes

WHO LAUNCHES PROGRAMME TO CONTROL GOITRE

Nineteen countries have been asked by the executive heads of three international organizations to join in a proposed programme to control endemic goitre and its dreadful consequences within the next decade.

The impetus for a stepped-up drive against goitre came from the Fourth Ministerial Session of the United Nations World Food Council meeting in Mexico in June, 1978. The resolution adopted in Mexico was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly last December. It urges governments to "adopt the goal of eradicating" endemic goitre within the next decade.

It has been estimated that more than 200 million people throughout the world are unnecessarily affected by goitre since the technical means to prevent goitre are available at very low cost.

A lack of iodine in the diet causes the common, endemic goitre, a widespread nutritional deficiency disease found particularly in the mountainous areas of the world. The iodine deficiency leads to the enlargement of the thyroid gland. Cretinism, or other forms of mental deficiency, and neurological disorders are frequent in children born to mothers with the disease. Yet, goitre can be prevented easily by adding iodine to table salt.

Letters offering international co-operation for an intensified effort to control endemic goitre in their respective countries were sent to Ministers of Planning besides Pakistan of the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan.

DRUG FROM PLANT TREATS, PREVENTS BLADDER TUMORS

Preliminary studies suggest that bladder installation or local injection of camptothecin, a substance derived from an indigenous plant, is useful in the prevention and treatment of urinary bladder tumors, according to Dr. Hsieh Tung, a urologist and associates at the First People's Hospital in Shanghai.

Camptothecin therapy was most effective in bladder tumors of the noninfiltrative, short-stalked multiple papilloma, and papillary car-

cinoma type, the investigators said. Dizziness, weakness, nausea, and epigastric pain occurred occasionally after instillation, but did not interfere with treatment.

The study group consisted of 52 patients, 40 males and 12 females. Of the 52 bladder tumors, 42 were noninfiltrative and 10 infiltrative. Pathological studies in 34 cases revealed two papillomas, one carcinoma in situ, and 31 papillary carcinomas ranging in grade from 0 to III. The therapeutic group consisted of 33 cases. There were 19 patients in whom excision or sloughing of the tumor took place. In these patients, prophylactic treatment with camptothecin was instituted.

In the therapeutic instillation, 20 mg camptothecin in 20 ml physiological saline was instilled per urethra twice weekly. The number of instillations varied from 10 to as many as 200. Local injection was performed under direct vision via cystoscopy; 5 to 10 mg in 2 to 4 ml were injected with a fine, long needle into the tumor mass or its base. In the prophylactic group, carried out every one to two weeks.

In 17 of the 33 therapeutic cases, there was a complete disappearance of the tumor. In 12 patients, there was no response; in four cases, there was no follow-up. In the 12 unresponsive cases, eight were late carcinomas, two were still having instillation treatments, and two had either partial or total colectomies, the researchers reported in the Chinese Medical Journal.

SARWAR ZUBERI APPOINTED EDITOR OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL

Dr. Sarwar Zuberi has been appointed as Editor of quarterly research bulletin of the Asian Pacific Association for The Study of Liver (APASL).

She has also been co-opted as a member of the executive committee of the association. In addition she is also a member of the international association for the study of the liver.

She has been invited to present a paper in the international workshop on primary liver cancer and chronic hepatitis which is going to be held from December 20 to December 22, this year in Singapore.

For the past few years Dr. Zuberi has been editing the research journal of PMA, which has been accepted by Index Medicus for indexing research articles.