

ASSOCIATION NOTES

SINGAPORE ENCEPHALITIS STUDY GROUP.

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Encephalitis in Singapore has been a subject of great interest for many years both to the clinical units and the laboratories. The Department of Bacteriology of the University of Singapore has directed its attention mainly to encephalitis due to Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) which appears to be the main cause of encephalitis in Singapore. In 1956, we began a study of the clinical and virological aspects of Japanese encephalitis, particularly in children. It is felt that the scope of research should now be expanded as our facilities have improved. Our studies have also been somewhat handicapped by the fact that encephalitis is not notifiable and there are no reliable estimates as to the real incidence of encephalitis in Singapore. The Department of Bacteriology therefore invited all units with access to encephalitis cases to join in a collaborative research programme. The proposal met with cordial reception from all concerned and a meeting* was held on 20th July 1962 in the Faculty of Medicine. This communication is a report on behalf of the Encephalitis Study Group that was inaugurated and the decision adopted in regard to the research programme.

It was agreed that the Study Group would consist of the representatives of the following units:—

Clinical Units:

- Medical Unit I, General Hospital, University Dept. of Medicine.
- Medical Unit II, General Hospital, University Dept. of Clinical Medicine.
- Paediatric Unit, General Hospital, University Paediatric Dept.
- Middleton Hospital.
- St. Andrew's Mission Hospital.
- Thomson Road Hospital.
- Medical Division, British Military Hospital.
- Paediatric Division, British Military Hospital.

Laboratory Units:

- Dept. of Bacteriology, University of Singapore.
- Dept. of Pathology, University of Singapore.

Dept. of Pathology, General Hospital.

Far East Land Forces Laboratory, and the clinical laboratories.

The participation of our military colleagues was very welcome and it may be assumed that the majority of cases of encephalitis occurring in Singapore would come under the notice of the Study Group. Excepting for cases which succumb rapidly after onset, we feel sure that relatives of patients with encephalitis would seek their admission to hospital.

The study Group proposed that its programme should be directed towards answering the following questions:—

- (1) What is the true incidence of encephalitis in Singapore?
- (2) What proportion of these cases can be attributed to known causes?
- (3) Where the etiology could not be determined, what possible causes could be suggested?

It was agreed that the collaborating clinical units would abstract from their clinical notes such data as would enable the Study Group to obtain a wide picture of encephalitis in Singapore. A proforma that we had used in previous studies was accepted for this purpose and has been distributed to all units.

Dr. Pong Wing Sen to whom cases would be reported was appointed Liaison Officer with the responsibility of collecting together the completed forms for the Study Group and ensuring that specimens for laboratory examination were obtained on schedule. (The military units would, however, send their specimens to the FARELF laboratory). From our previous experience, we had felt the need for such an officer located in the Bacteriology Department because, with the turn over of staff in the wards, cases occasionally got lost sight of.

The Study Group agreed that the study should be confined to cases exhibiting symptoms of cerebral disorder with cerebrospinal changes, but as the latter sometimes developed slowly, and it was desirable to obtain specimens early in disease, doubtful cases should be included and if the clinical picture becomes clear, be deleted subsequently. Since the cases to be studied would

* Present at the meeting were Dr. K. H. Tan, Paediatric Unit, G.H.; Dr. W. O. Phoon, Paediatric Unit, University; Dr. Seah Cheng Siang, Thomson Road Hospital; Brigadier T. P. McKelvey, Consulting Physician, FARELF.; Lt. Col. W. O'Brien, Medical Division, B.M.H.; Prof. Lim Kok Ann, Dr. Lee Liang Hin and Dr. Pong Wing Sen of the Department of Bacteriology; Dr. J. Stein, Pathology Department, G.H.; Col. M. H. P. Sayers, Asst. Director of Pathology, FARELF.; Major R. J. Hart, Virologist, FARELF.

include the whole range from frank encephalitis to those showing minimal signs resembling aseptic meningitis, the differentiation of border line cases would be a most important function. The Study Group would meet at intervals to review the cases together with the results of laboratory tests and report their findings. In addition, the Encephalitis Study Group would circulate informal bulletins on work in progress to participants.

The participants of the Encephalitis Study Group are those known to us to have been concerned with encephalitis cases. We would take

this opportunity of inviting any worker or groups to communicate with us should they wish to participate in the study group. Alternatively, if they are unable to do so, should they encounter encephalitis cases, for example, in private practice where the patients do not wish hospitalisation, to assist us by filling in our Proforma and if possible to obtain specimens for laboratory tests. Briefly, specimens required are, acute and convalescent phase blood samples, cerebral spinal fluid and two faecal samples. (Further details from Bacteriology Department, University of Singapore).

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NUTRITION SOCIETY

Forthcoming Meetings

March, 1963

The Nutrition Society will hold a symposium on "Nutritional Problems in Infancy and Childhood."

Saturday, April 20, 1963

The Scottish Group of the Nutrition Society will hold a symposium in Glasgow on "Some aspects of chemical changes during the preservation and storage of food."

FOOD SCIENTISTS AND TECHNOLOGISTS

At an open meeting held at the National College of Food Technology on February 15 last, an ad hoc committee was appointed to give further consideration to the proposal that a new organisation for food scientists and technologists should be formed in this country, and to report to another open meeting before the end of the year.

The committee have held three meetings and have now concluded their deliberations. The

members have reached the unanimous conclusion that a new professional organisation is needed and they will recommend this in a report which they are arranging to publish in the food press during the month of October.

In accordance with wishes expressed at the meeting held last February, the committee will present their report formally at a second open meeting to be held in London. This meeting has now been arranged for Wednesday, December 5, 1962 at 7 p.m. at the Borough Polytechnic, Borough Road, London, S.E.1., through the courtesy of the Governors, and it is hoped that all those interested in the proposal will attend to express their views.

DATIN THOMSON, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.
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GALLOWAY MEMORIAL LECTURESHIP 1963

Application is now open for the above lecture to be delivered towards the end of 1963 in Singapore. The subject must be one pertaining to the Medical Sciences and consist of original work. An honorarium of \$100/- will be awarded to the lecturer. Application with personal curriculum vitae and an outline of the subject matter embodied in the lecture may be sent to:—

Mr. J. E. Choo,
Scribe, Academy of Medicine,
General Hospital,
Singapore, 3.

The closing date for applications is 31st March, 1963.