

Tuberculosis Increasing; Have You Had An X-Ray?

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Tuberculosis is seldom a cause of death any more, but it still is a serious illness that rates a lot more attention from the public than it is getting.

In the last six years there were only 11 deaths from TB in Champaign County, but in the same period more than 110 new cases of the disease were discovered here, and the rate has been increasing in this area during the last two years.

Throughout the United States a total of 40 million Americans are estimated to have been in-

Last of Three Articles

infected with tuberculosis. In Champaign County, by applying the ratio here, the possible infected total is 2,900 persons.

This statistic does not mean that nearly 3,000 county residents have the disease actively and should be hospitalized.

It does mean, however, that nearly 3,000 persons in the area may have had a mild case of TB at one time, with most of them unaware they were infected because the inflammation healed quietly by itself without showing symptoms or requiring special care.

It is important for the public to realize in this regard that many new cases of tuberculosis which will become active in the future are likely to occur among members of this group.

The Illinois Tuberculosis Assn. says that 75 per cent of the new cases destined to become active in the next few years will be developing from those persons already infected but presently inactive.

If such is the case, it would seem to be an advantage for each individual to know if he was previously infected so he could be certain to have com-



News-Gazette Photo by Curt Palmer

READY FOR X-RAY. One of the 8,500 persons who receive a free chest X-ray at the Chest Clinic in Champaign every year takes a few minutes to give some health information to nurse Mrs. Frances Brown. The clinic is open to the public six days a week throughout the year, yet many thousands of local residents have never had a chest X-ray to make sure they do not have tuberculosis.

were untested, and were thus a possible public health danger to the 75 per cent who were known to be free of tuberculosis.

Pamphlets with information on the disease were circulated to the Ludlow people, but a late follow-up was not held to determine how many of the un-X-rayed persons may have since gone to the Chest Clinic.

The Chest Clinic in Champaign is supported entirely by funds of the Champaign County TB Assn., which are obtained solely through Christmas Seal contributions.

Under executive secretary Mrs. Edna Alexander, the county TB Assn. operates on a year-round basis, maintaining

his community will not only spare more people wasted bed-ridden years, it will permit a well-equipped and well-maintained 50-bed institution to be used for other community health services and channel efforts into other disease problems where aid is so badly needed.

each individual to know if he was previously infected so he would be certain to have regular check-ups and take better protective care of himself.

Although not utilized extensively, a simple test has been available for many years to answer the question of who is infected and who isn't.

Called a 'tuberculin skin test,' this ready means of determining one's association with the disease is obtainable free at the TB Chest Clinic in Champaign.

Injected in a drop amount into the skin of the forearm, the tuberculin test material consists of a weak solution of a purified chemical protein that is derived from a culture in which TB germs were grown.

If the person being tested has active tuberculosis now, or was infected at some time during his life, his reaction to the injection will be positive—a reddened area occurring within two or three days at the site of injection.

A chest X-ray will show whether the disease is active or not.

If the tuberculin-tested person receives no reaction to the injection, he is pronounced negative, and is told he neither has the disease now nor ever had it.

While few children or young people contract TB nowadays, the rate of infection rises considerably as the age increases.

The number of persons in the various age groups estimated to be infected, according to the Illinois TB

Survey, executive secretary Mrs. Edna Alexander, the county TB Assn. operates on a year-round basis, maintaining an office at 110 N. Neil, Champaign.

The Champaign County TB Assn. would like to see an active campaign held in every township to get 100 per cent test participation, but thus far no individuals or organizations have exerted the leadership to conduct such a campaign.

Last year a total of 8,579 persons received an X-ray at the Champaign clinic, but while this was the largest yearly total to date, it is little better than the average of 8,482 for the past five years.

Of the 8,579 persons X-rayed in 1960, the majority were former "patients" who had been to the clinic previously. Only 3,471 were new patients having an X-ray for the first time.

It may also be noted here that a large number of those receiving X-rays each year are not from the general public, but are special groups such as food handlers, school employes, athletes and student nurses who are compelled to have the examinations as a requisite to their positions.

These special groups show up generally in the month of August, greatly increasing the number of X-rays for that month. Last year, for example, there were 1,552 persons X-rayed in August, as compared to the average of 715 persons during other months.

The Chest Clinic, located

at 110 N. Neil, Champaign, is under the direction of Mrs. Edna Alexander, executive secretary. The county TB Assn. operates on a year-round basis, maintaining an office at 110 N. Neil, Champaign.

Besides supplying the X-ray and tuberculin testing materials for the public free, the Association pays the salaries of Chest Clinic staff members, does the clerical work in mailing out all X-ray results and notices, and publishes a variety of educational materials on TB.

A chest X-ray is no longer recommended annually, but it is the aim of the TB Assn. to at least have each person X-rayed once. The X-ray not only serves to locate TB cases, but it is also a great public health service in helping to find non-tuberculous diseases of the lung.

Tuberculosis eradicated from