

MEDICINE

Jaundice Research May Give Clue to Arthritis Control

Disease Does Not Cure But Provides "Vacation" From the Pains of Muscular Type of Rheumatism

DISCOVERY that jaundice temporarily checks the progress of chronic deforming arthritis, suggests that this most crippling and disabling of all forms of chronic rheumatism can no longer be regarded as a relentlessly progressive, uncontrollable disease for which no really satisfactory remedy need be expected, Dr. Philip S. Hench, of the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn., told members of the American Association for the Study and Control of Rheumatic Diseases meeting at Atlantic City.

No new method of treating arthritis is ready for application at present. Dr. Hench made this point very clear. The work is still in the experimental stage and many complex problems must be solved before the stage of treating patients is reached. Dr. Hench reported investigations on these problems which he has been carrying on since 1929.

"The time will come, perhaps in no distant future," Dr. Hench said, "when physicians will probably be able promptly and completely to eradicate the painful symptoms of this disease as well as those of chronic muscular rheumatism. When this time comes physicians will probably be able to control the progress of deforming arthritis much as diabetes is now controlled."

Relief

At the present time physicians can give considerable relief to sufferers with chronic arthritis and chronic muscular rheumatism by the use of various measures, the removal of infections, different types of vaccines and medicines, sometimes the use of special diets and particularly by the prolonged use of certain physical agents, such as heat and massage. Unfortunately for the present-day victims of rheumatism these measures, though generally successful in time, are often slow in producing their effects. Hence patients continue to hunt for a more dramatic relief, a "quick cure."

Scattered throughout this country there are at least 44 persons who had chronic rheumatism, sometimes severely, and who suddenly lost their symptoms almost overnight, Dr. Hench reported.

In behalf of those patients nature had pulled out of her sleeve a "new" and a "trick method" of helping them, and that method was—of all things—jaundice. Every one of these 44 rheumatic patients had developed a jaundice for various reasons, and when the jaundice became fairly intense suddenly their rheumatic pains, stiffness or swelling began to leave. Each of these patients immediately got a "vacation from rheumatism" which lasted anywhere from 3 weeks to 3 years. Then their symptoms came back, sometimes as bad as before, but often in a much milder form.

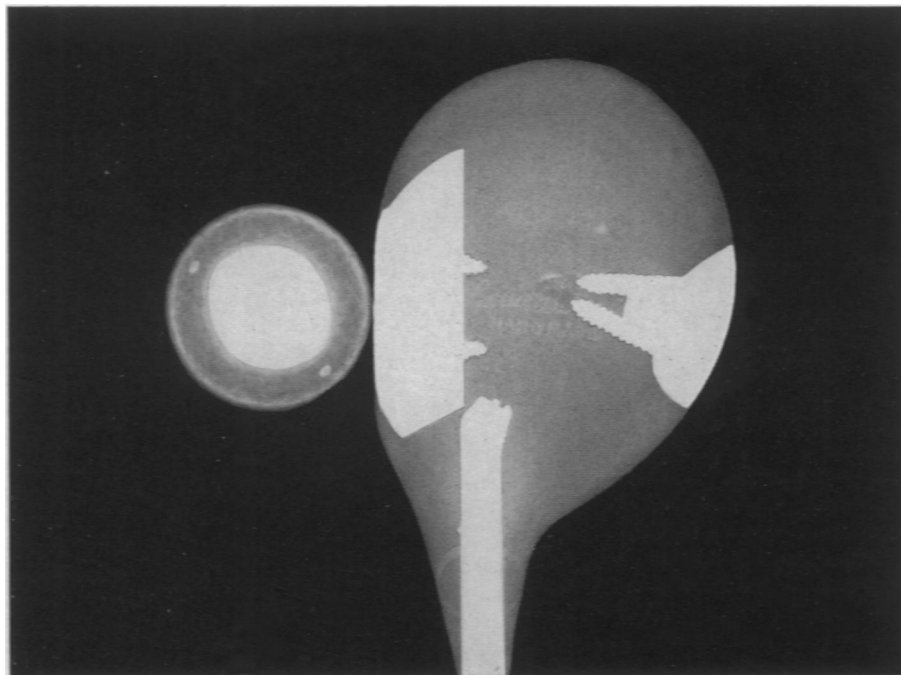
Nature's Secret

Hearing the story of these forty-four patients, and examining their joints and muscles during and after the jaundice, Dr. Hench became certain that nature was demonstrating a special brand of

rheumatism-control, not her usual rather lazy way of stopping the disease after weeks or months of discomfort. The remissions which jaundice precipitated came on quite rapidly, usually within the first three days after the jaundice became definitely visible. As one person expressed it, "When the jaundice came in the front door, the rheumatism went out the back door." Among those who have experienced this phenomenon all the patients with muscular rheumatism and two-thirds of those with chronic deforming—or as physicians call it, chronic infectious, atrophic—arthritis were completely, if temporarily relieved of their symptoms. One-third of the arthritic patients were notably but not completely relieved.

No One Type

Apparently no one type of jaundice is responsible for this effect, according to Dr. Hench. The phenomenon has resulted from jaundice due to a variety of causes but a "touch of jaundice" will not produce the beneficial effect, and a fairly intense jaundice is required. The remissions in symptoms, or "vacations from rheumatism" sometimes lasted like ordinary vacations—just a few days to three weeks, and then the rheumatism went back to work again on its victim.



WHAT'S INSIDE

Here's what golfers would see as they tee-off if they had X-ray eyes. The golf ball's core, the end of the steel shaft, the sole plate, weight and the screws that hold them together are all shown in this X-ray photograph made by Miss Francis M. Davis of Santa Monica, California