

Legalized Abortion Urged

Problems of contraception and family planning and of legalizing abortion were among issues discussed at the AMA's annual convention—By Faye Marley

➤ "THE IDEAL society would never have abortions," famed anthropologist Dr. Margaret Mead of the American Museum of Natural History said at the 115th annual convention of the American Medical Association in Chicago. But she added that if abortions are performed they should be legalized so that they would be safer than they are under the present system.

Conception control rather than birth control is the term she prefers because birth control can include abortion.

Dr. Mead said there will be a dozen forms of conception control in the next few years, but at the present time the coil is the cheapest and easiest to use.

The "pill" takes conception control out of the man's hands, because only the woman needs to be aware of it, Dr. Mead said. Both sexes should be responsible.

"One of our major problems in this country today is that young people get married too early because they are preg-

nant," she said. "I don't believe this is due to ignorance except in the poorer populations, but because of parents' attitudes. Teen-agers know they will get their parents' consent to marriage if they become pregnant, and they want to get married."

Dr. Mead shared the American Medical Association convention platform with Dr. James Z. Appel, outgoing president of the organization, and with Dr. Howard C. Taylor of New York in a session on population expansion.

She called on the medical profession to include the entire world in its health responsibilities, and said the AMA has shown a growing interest in international medicine, especially with its Project Saigon. The health of the world is the acid test of progress she said.

Dr. Appel said "indigent women who must go to public health and welfare agencies all to often are discriminated against by being denied these services which they so desperately need

and want." Last year the AMA House of Delegates urged that appropriate legislation be enacted, wherever necessary, so that all physicians may legally give contraceptive information to their patients.

In 1964, the House of Delegates stated that "an intelligent recognition of the problems that relate to human reproduction, including the need for population control, is more than a matter of responsible parenthood, it is a matter of responsible medical service."

• *Science News*, 90:19 July 9, 1966

MEDICINE

System for Coding Medical Pills Developed

➤ A SYSTEM for printing a code on each medical capsule and tablet that quickly and positively identifies the product and its exact formula has been developed by Eli Lilly and Company.

The system, called Identi-Code, consists of a combination of one letter and two figures which specify the form of the medication and its name and formula when reference is made to a Lilly code index. The code booklet will be distributed to physicians, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, police, poison-control experts and others who deal with medical emergencies.

The new system will prove invaluable in cases of accidental overdoses, in preventing errors in medication, and for identifying medication when the prescription is lost or misplaced. Quick, accurate identification will be possible in telephone or written communication.

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MEDICINE

Antibiotic Blend Slows Bacterial Resistance

➤ THE RESISTANCE barrier some germs form to block the action of a single antibiotic can in large measure be prevented from forming by a blend of properly chosen antibiotics.

In a new test for the pinpoint gauging of bacterial resistance, scientists found that a combination of novobiocin and tetracycline retards the resistance that can build up to either drug alone.

The finding, which had been previously suggested in theory was supported in fact in a scientific exhibit at the AMA convention by Drs. James J. Vavra, George M. Savage, and Joseph E. Grady, all of Upjohn Company, Kalamazoo, Mich.

The bacterium tested against the antibiotics was *Staphylococcus aureus* which has a bent for developing antibiotic resistance. It is a stubborn germ that causes many infections, from sore throat to osteomyelitis, and its staying power makes it a hospital scourge.

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Upjohn Company

COUNTING SURVIVORS—Dr. James J. Vavra of the Upjohn Company, Kalamazoo, Mich., is using a new test technique to determine resistance as he counts the bacteria cells that survive in the presence of antibiotics. Resistance usually develops from repeated contacts of the bacteria with an antibiotic.