

MEDICINE

# Germs May Be at Root Of Gray Hair Problem

## Germs, Ordinarily Harmless, May Destroy Pantothenic Acid, Upsetting Its Ratio to PAB, Causing Graying

**G**ERMS may be at the root of the gray hair problem. This possibility appears in a report by Dr. Gustav J. Martin, of the Warner Institute for Therapeutic Research, New York City, to the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology in Boston.

Dr. Martin is one of a group of scientists who last fall reported that lack of a vitamin-like chemical, para aminobenzoic acid, was the cause of gray hair and that doses of this chemical would remedy the condition. Dr. Martin's stud-

ies were on rats, while others applied the findings, apparently successfully, to humans with gray hair.

Now Dr. Martin reports, after further experiments with rats, that it is not PAB (para aminobenzoic acid) alone but the ratio of this chemical to another vitamin chemical, pantothenic acid, that is the important factor deciding whether or not rats, and possibly humans, will turn gray. A ratio favoring PAB results in graying, Dr. Martin reports.

The germs come into the picture because certain of these microbes, harmless ones that are normally present in the intestinal tract, are stimulated to grow by PAB. Probably, Dr. Martin explains, these germs destroy pantothenic acid, thus upsetting the ratio of this vitamin to PAB.

*Science News Letter, April 11, 1942*

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## ● RADIO

Saturday, April 18, 1:30 p.m., EWT

"Adventures in Science," with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over Columbia Broadcasting System.

George W. Bailey, chairman of the radio section of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, will tell of the need for men and women for radio work in the Army and Navy.

Tuesday, April 14, 7:30 p.m., EWT

Science Clubs of America programs over WRUL, Boston, on 6.04, 9.70 and 11.73 megacycles.

One in a series of regular periods over this short wave station to serve science clubs, particularly in the high schools, throughout the Americas. Have your science group listen in at this time.

the Boston chapter, the relief squadrons will use privately owned equipment. Each is equipped with 16 station wagons, tents, trailers, cots, stretchers, first aid and emergency feeding provisions. The squadrons work in cooperation with government and defense agencies.

An agreement between the Red Cross and the National Restaurant Association insures feeding of extremely large numbers of evacuees should that necessity arise.

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MEDICINE

### More Than 6,000 Doctors Needed By Army Air Forces

**T**HE ARMY air forces need 2,500 physicians to be commissioned by July 1, and 600 additional physicians each month for the rest of the year, it is reported in the *American Medical Association Journal* (March 28).

This is a total of 6,100 physicians; most of those required must be under the age of 37. More than 1,000 specialists in surgery, ophthalmology and neuropsychiatry between the ages of 37 and 45 are needed.

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### Factor Still "X"

"X," SIGNIFYING unknown, is still the only name that can be given to the anti-gray hair vitamin or food ingredient, according to a report from Dr. F. Peirce Dann, Dr. Ruth C. Moore and Dr. D. V. Frost, of the Abbott Laboratories, North Chicago, Ill.

PAB had no effect on graying alone and slight, if any, supplementary effect with calcium pantothenate, these scientists report of their experiments with rats. Giving all the known B vitamins including PAB did not prevent graying. But brewers' yeast and whole livtr powder each prevented graying. So the scientists again propose an unknown as the anti-gray hair chemical in food.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

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