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Psychology Rated Big Factor In Treatment of Arthritis

By JUDY BRIMBERG
Denver Post Staff Writer

The medical director of the Arthritis and Rheumatism Foundation Thursday said that the patient as well as the disease should be considered in treating arthritis.

"The patient's nervous reaction is like wind to a flame. The flame (the disease) must be there, but the patient's psychological reaction can intensify it greatly," said Dr. Ronald W. Lamont-Havers of New York.

He was one of the main speakers at a two-day course on management and rehabilitation of arthritic patients held at the Veterans Hospital Auditorium, 1055 Clermont St. The sessions are sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Arthritis and Rheumatism Foundation, the Colorado State Department of Rehabilitation and the University of Colorado School of Medicine. More than 150 persons from 20 states and Canada are attending.

ASPIRIN TREATMENT

Dr. Lamont-Havers said current treatment consists of large doses of aspirin under medical supervision.

In addition, physical medical care is begun as soon as possible.

"Rather than large elaborate devices, the physical medical treatment consists of simple exercises. . . . It is more important what the patient does than what is done to him," Dr. Lamont-Havers said.

The medical director estimated that 10 pct. of the population over 40 is afflicted with degenerative arthritis, and of these, about one pct. are seriously handicapped.

Physical medicine is used to

prevent deformities and surgery is performed to overcome the affliction. Dr. Lamont-Havers noted that Denver hospitals have done excellent work in correcting hand and foot deformities.

Rheumatoid arthritis tests on animals indicate the disease may be caused by an auto-immune body reacting against itself. However, the tests with animals cannot be viewed as conclusive since animals do not develop the disease themselves, the director said.

However, scientists also are trying to determine what causes degenerative arthritis, which does occur naturally in animals. Doctors already believe that those afflicted with degenerative arthritis in the hands may pass it on to their offspring.

QUACK CURES

Dr. Lamont-Havers listed the following most popular "quack cures" for arthritis:

- Bee-sting therapy.
- Immune milk. The "cure" is based on the theory that arthritis is caused by a streptococcus germ.
- Vitamin therapy.
- Herbal tonics.
- Magic metal bracelets.

He stated the quackery still remains a serious problem in treating the arthritic patient.

Other speakers were Dr. Ephraim P. Engleman, San Francisco, president of the American Rheumatism Assn., and Dr. Donald L. Rose, chairman of the department of physical medicine at the University of Kansas School of Medicine.

TYPES CLASSIFIED

Dr. Engleman described the different types of arthritis.

Rheumatic fever and rheumatoid arthritis generally are found most frequently among young people. Three other types are most common among those over 40: the degenerative type, where the joints are afflicted; the internal metabolic type—such as gout, and infectious arthritis.

Dr. Harold S. Robinson, Vancouver, medical director of the British Columbia Division of the Canadian Arthritis and Rheumatism Society, described the in-patient team approach used in his area. Traveling occupational therapy vans make it possible for family doctors to utilize specialized care for patients, Dr. Robinson said.

Steve Biding Time on Race

Gov. Steve McNichols, returning to his office Thursday after attending the National Governors Conference in Pennsylvania, said he hasn't "given much thought" to the timing of his expected political announcement.

He has until July 18 — 10 days before the state Democratic assembly — to decide what to do. Almost everyone, including potential Republican adversaries, expects him to announce his candidacy for re-election.

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