

'Heart Disease' Useful Catchword for Ailments

By K. H. SUTHERLAND, M.D., County Health Officer

The term "heart disease" is a general catchword that includes many different disorders which affect not only the heart but the entire circulatory system as well. In medical circles the term "cardiovascular diseases" is considered more accurately descriptive of this group of disorders since both the heart and the blood vessels may be involved. Whatever name is used, these disorders cause more than 900,000 deaths in this country each year, or slightly more than 54 per cent of all the deaths that occur.

This is not as formidable as it first seems, however, since so much progress has been made during recent years in the diagnosis and control of heart and circulatory ailments. Thousands of people now live with heart and blood vessel disorders that were considered hopeless cases just a generation ago.

THE VICTIMS of heart and vascular diseases come from all age groups and walks of life. Not even infants are exempted. Congenital heart disease is present in 30 to 40 thousand children born each year in the United States. In fact, the death rate from heart disease under age one is higher than for any other age group under 45.

Most frequently, heart attacks result from arteriosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. As this ailment progresses, it gradually narrows the blood vessels and may shut off an artery serving the heart muscle, thus depriving a section of the heart of its blood supply. Symptoms may vary greatly but often include severe and painful sensations of pressure in the front of the chest, sometimes extending to the arms and other parts of the body. There may also be sweating, sudden and intense shortness of breath, and loss of consciousness.

HYPERTENSION, or high blood pressure, is another common underlying cause of heart trouble, and this condition affects perhaps 5 million Americans. In hypertension the heart must pump with more than normal force, and the arteries must carry the blood under increased pressure. Continued over a long period, this means an overworked circulatory system which no longer functions as it should. Fortunately, there is a growing list of drugs which are effective in controlling most cases of high blood pressure.

Of course, cardiovascular disorders may be caused by a great many conditions other than arteriosclerosis or hypertension. Syphilis, diphtheria, streptococcal sore throat and certain other infectious diseases, as well as neglected thyroid disorders, may all cause heart damage.

THOUGH THE underlying causes of the many forms of cardiovascular disease are only partially understood, it is obvious that too many people abuse their hearts through strenuous activity extended over long periods, or by failing to seek medical attention in the early stages of illness. It is especially important for those individuals past 40 to realize that it is better to slow down one's pace before it becomes necessary.

A heart attack can be a frightening experience, not only for the individual but for his family as well. Still, it is encouraging to know that most people who have heart attacks today recover and return to work, that high blood pressure usually can be controlled, that strokes are not hopeless, and that many heart defects can be repaired through surgery.

PUBLIC education in health has provided the knowledge by

Janet Kimbrell
Y-Teen Officer

Janet Kimbrell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Woodrow Kimbrell of 20821 Avis, will represent Torrance Y-Teens at the annual Southern California YWCA Teenage Summer Conference at the California Western University in San Diego June 22 to 27.

Now serving as Delta Y-Teen president, Janet was elected at a recent general planning session in Santa Ana, as one of the girl executives for this year's conference.

which the individual can do much to reduce the risk of acquiring a cardiovascular disease, but it still remains true that a periodic visit to a physician is the best insurance against these disorders that is available. Such conditions are generally controlled most easily and successfully in the early stages of their development.

As part of its public education program the Los Angeles Heart Assn. has made available for distribution a limited number of the booklet, Facts About Heart and Blood Vessel Diseases. A copy may be obtained by sending a card of request to the Division of Health Education, Los Angeles County Health Department, 241 N. Figueroa St., Los Angeles 12.

Law in Action

Now and then you may need extra help around the house. You hire someone to do some chores, to help you build a fence, or add a room. Does such work impose legal obligations on you in addition to wages?

Check with the Internal Revenue Service whether you must withhold taxes, or report social security payments. As a rule, casual work, not a regular steady employment, in-

volves no duty to report wages and make tax deductions, except domestic help under the "50-hour" per quarter rule. The employee must declare his income and pay taxes on it. He may also have to include it in his "self employment" tax for social security.

OFTEN PEOPLE who work around your house are not directly "employees," but independent contractors. They have

their own "business" of baby-sitting, gardening, painting, or other odd jobs. As for independent contractors you need not make any wage deductions.

It may be wise to have a public liability policy to cover persons hurt around your home which would include occasional workers, in case you should become liable.

IF HOUSEHOLD help works for more than 52 hours a week, then one might well buy a workmen's compensation policy to cover a worker who may get hurt on the job even though he is self-insured: You

should also buy a workmen's compensation for a gardener or other handyman who works more than 44 hours a week. If you start a big project like adding a room, such an accident policy is a good idea. Under the law a person who works more than 10 days or on a job that costs more than \$100 in wages, is not "casual" employed. He then should have protection in case he gets hurt.

A person who rents out part of his home or some apart-

ment may be in the "trade or business" of renting. Handymen, maids, etc., as regular employees fall under the workmen's compensation laws.

An employee protected under these laws and hurt on a job gets a financial recovery for his injury from his employer, no matter who is to blame. The employer must make the place safe for his workers, and pay for their injuries on the job—usually through insurance.

Note: California lawyers offer this column so you may know about our laws.

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