

Harbor Doctor Working on New Heart Pump

A lifesaving technique that could save many lives and prevent further injury to patients with severe left heart failure is being developed at Harbor General Hospital. Supported by Heart Association funds, the project is under the direction of Dr. William E. Bloomer, associate professor of surgery at UC-

LA. The doctor is researching a way to relieve heart patients with an artificial support that may reinforce part of the heart's normal functions. The lifesaving technique would relieve the severely damaged heart of some of its customary work load with substituted blood pumping facilities.

Dr. Bloomer, who has been working on the project for the last year, has designed a modified pump which has been used experimentally by him as a by-pass for the damaged circulatory system. This pulsatile piece of equipment automatically circulates and returns all blood flowing into

it at rates up to six liters per minute. At Harbor General, Dr. Bloomer is experimenting to see how much assistance can be rendered by special means such as pumping, without increasing dangers to the heart. Also, he is trying to discover how long a tube

safely can be left in the heart. "We know that pump-assisted blood flow causes the blood to break down over long periods of time," the local medical man explained. "What we hope to discover are ways of avoiding this breakdown, or reducing it so that it is insignificant com-

pared to the pump's total helpful effect on the patient." "Strangely enough, one of the most difficult problems we have had to face has been to find a method of reproducing in the laboratory the type of heart failure with which we are most concerned. After trying a num-

ber of methods with laboratory animals reproducing this kind of heart failure, we discovered a process that gave us a result closely similar to what we saw in hospital patients," the Harbor General doctor added. "It is hoped that patients with heart failure of such severe proportions that could normally be fatal, will have a greater chance to survive if such research with artificial heart aids are successful," he explained. "Those with severe heart failure may be able to live with artificial heart assistance until the partially healed heart is ready to assume a more nearly normal load," he concluded. Dr. Bloomer's research is one of many research and educational projects financed by Heart Association funds to help curtail the nation's number one killer and crippler—heart and circulatory disorders.

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