

Danger of Pill doubted

Associated Press
SAN ANTONIO — Questionable studies by American and British scientists linking birth control pills and various diseases could be damaging to developing countries needing family planning, says a leading authority on the pill.

Dr. J. W. Goldzieher of Southwest Foundation for Research and Education said Tuesday that such developing countries need reassurance that family planning is essential to their welfare.

"Instead of that we scare them half to death by a misinterpretation of very complicated and very equivocal statistical studies which . . . cannot by their very nature prove cause or effect," he said.

Goldzieher, an internationally recognized authority on reproductive biology and endocrinology, talked about the studies examined in his 40-page paper in the current "American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology."

Biostatistician Tazewell O. Dozier, also of the Southwest Foundation, co-authored the paper.

Goldzieher and Dozier said that studies linking the pill to blood clotting were inadequate and probably wrong.

"The birth control pill causes fewer serious adverse reactions than aspirin," Goldzieher said.

They said most studies linking the pill to diseases such as blood clotting, heart attacks or strokes were based on small numbers of women specially selected for study.

Goldzieher said most such studies began with all blood clot cases diagnosed in a certain group such as hospital records.

After about 90 per cent of the subjects were eliminated because their blood clots could be laid on other causes, Goldzieher said the studies would conclude: "Since we can't know of any factor causing the remaining clots, we'll say the pill caused it."

"The kinds of studies that have been done do not rule out coincidence because they do not prove cause and effect," the doctor said, "and most people misunderstand these studies to indicate that they do prove cause and effect."

Dozier added, "To take a very small sample of 100 or 125 women and try to determine a cause and effect relationship that is going to affect the entire world is a pretty risky undertaking."

He added that statistics are incapable of projecting such results from small samples as have been used in most American and British studies.

Mono cases on increase

The Brazos County Health Department said yesterday that sixty-eight more cases of infectious mononucleosis were reported in November than in October.

In October, 46 cases were reported, compared to 114 cases in November, an increase of up nearly 148 per cent.

Other diseases reported to the health department included 57 cases of gonorrhea, 42 cases of strep throat and 29 cases of influenza.

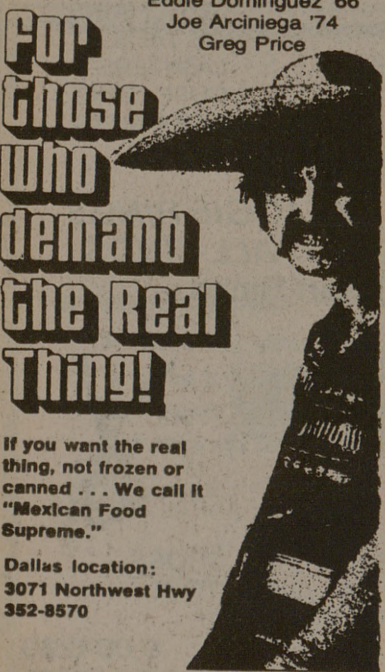
Four cases of pneumonia, three cases of scarlet fever and three cases of syphilis were also reported.

Two cases each of chickenpox and measles and one case each of mumps and infectious hepatitis were recorded.

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Doctor's Bag

Doctor's Bag is a service to students at A&M. If you have a health question, contact Sandy Russo at The Battalion. All questions in this column are answered by Dr. Claude Goswick, director of the Health Center.

Q. Can you get an abortion in College Station? If not, where is the nearest recommended abortion clinic?

A. No abortion service is available in College Station. Reputable clinics are in Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Austin, and most large cities. Appointments may be made by the individual or through Planned Parenthood Clinic in College Station.

Q. How can I cure my cold sores or fever blisters? Why do I get them?

A. So-called "cold sores" or "fever blisters" are usually caused by a virus which probably lies dormant in oral mucus membrane only to flare up during a "cold," "flu," or various other illnesses,

and even certain emotional upsets! They can be treated in various ways — none of which is particularly effective: cautery with silver nitrate, smallpox vaccinations, conservative treatment with antiseptics, hydrogen peroxide, and anesthetics. For the most part these ulcers run a benign course, clear up without residual scarring and have primarily a nuisance effect.

Q. My dog has hookworms. Is there any chance I'll get them?

A. As a general rule, humans will not be infested by dog hookworms. Although dog hookworms may enter the skin (usually through bare feet) of humans and cause some local irritation, they will not then go through their normal life cycle and cause potentially serious medical problems.

Q. I have phlebitis and must stand most of the day, thus my leg hurts. Is there any

thing I can do to ease the pain?

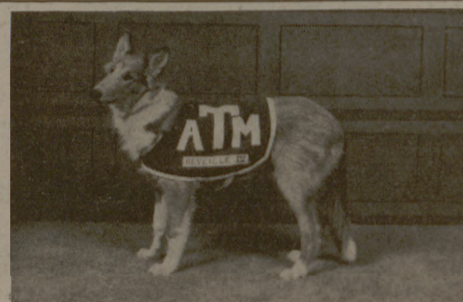
A. Since phlebitis is an inflammation of veins — usually in lower extremities — certain principles of hydrodynamics apply. Position may considerably affect the symptoms, namely there is apt to be more pain and discomfort when the legs are dependent and blood tends to be pooled in competent superficial veins. Therefore some type of elastic bandage to force blood out of the superficial system into the deeper or usually more competent system of veins is usually helpful. The condition can be somewhat improved by physical activity (walking, etc.) while standing as opposed to standing still. Legs should be elevated if possible (e.g. sitting with legs on stool, desk, chair, etc.) or lying down. If the condition is such that varicose veins are present which lend themselves to phlebitis, surgical vein-stripping can help.

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