

NEWS DIGEST

of the NEW YORK HEALTH DEMONSTRATIONS

HOMER FOLKS cites the leading editorial in the *Saturday Evening Post* of August 25, 1928, as "gratifying and convincing evidence of a recent change in the public mind regarding the objective of public health work. Popular thought," he says, "seems increasingly to be considering the results of health work in the terms of prolongation of life rather than simply of reduction in the death rate as expressed in terms of a percentage."

The editorial entitled, "Nine Years Going Begging," says in part: "The richest and the least-worked mine of health, happiness and potential wealth lies in the field of preventive medicine. The achievements of modern medicine during the past thirty or forty years may be fairly called stupendous; and yet so much remains to be done for the organized conservation of health and life and physical well-being that the battles of the future press

harder for attention than the victories of the past.

"Tuberculosis has been bereft of much of its old terror. Diphtheria, the dread menace of childhood, is in full retreat and would have long ago been routed except for ignorance and prejudice. . . . The results of these and of other advances is that during the past generation nine years have been added to the span of human life. . . . With nine extra years of life going begging, such matters are worth thinking about and worth doing something about."



IN common with most other American cities Syracuse experienced a higher death rate in April and May than usual. In sharp contrast, the Cattaraugus County death rate for the first six months of 1928 was very slightly higher than that of the two previous years and its monthly rate showed no unusual variation. The graphs

in the accompanying diagram are plotted from the following figures:

Deaths from all causes per 100,000 population, by months (annual basis), January to June, in Syracuse and in Cattaraugus County, 1925-1928.

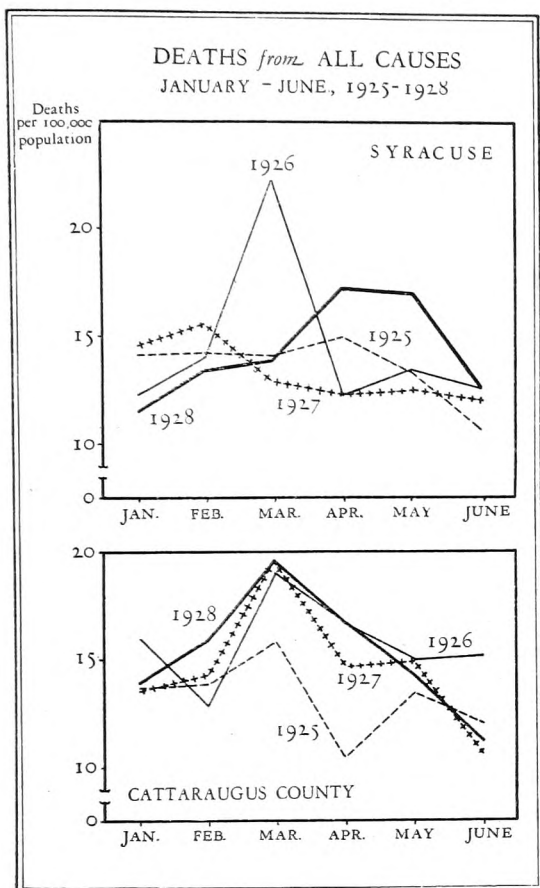
Month	1925	1926	1927	1928
Syracuse				
January-June....	13.6	14.5	13.3	14.2
January...	14.1	12.3	14.6	11.5
February...	14.2	14.0	15.6	13.4
March....	14.1	22.3	12.9	13.8
April.....	15.0	12.3	12.3	17.2
May.....	13.3	13.4	12.5	17.0
June.....	10.7	12.6	12.0	12.6
Cattaraugus County				
January-June....	13.2	15.8	14.7	15.3
January...	13.7	16.0	13.6	13.9
February...	13.8	12.8	14.3	15.9
March....	15.8	19.0	19.5	19.6
April.....	10.5	16.7	14.7	16.7
May.....	13.4	14.9	14.8	14.3
June.....	12.0	15.2	10.6	11.2

AN examination of the Syracuse mortality statistics in more detail reveals the facts: first, that the principal causes of this increase in the death rate in the late spring were respiratory; second, that the rise in the death rate from respiratory causes was accompanied by an increase in the number of deaths from circulatory conditions. The correla-

tion of these two groups of causes, at least since the present epidemic influenza epoch began, has been frequently noted in several localities throughout the country. The Syracuse experience for 1928 is quite clear, as the following comparison shows:

Number of cases of and deaths from pneumonia and number of deaths from diseases of the circulatory system, in Syracuse, January to June, 1925-1928.

Month	(a) Pneumonia Cases	
	Range 1925-27	1928
January....	36-83	90
February...	50-76	75
March.....	68-221	126
April.....	33-98	197
May.....	31-60	217
June.....	24-53	67
Month	(b) Pneumonia Deaths	
	Range 1925-27	1928
January....	19-38	14
February...	19-34	10
March.....	21-55	26
April.....	16-24	43
May.....	15-20	33
June.....	13-17	20
Month	(c) Deaths from Heart and other Circulatory Diseases	
	Range 1925-27	1928
January....	47-80	44
February...	54-60	65
March.....	35-94	53
April.....	51-57	76
May.....	44-60	72
June.....	37-56	44



Deaths from all causes per 100,000 population, by months (annual basis), January to June, in Syracuse and in Cattaraugus County, 1925-1928.

The figures in *italics* exceed the maxima for the corresponding months of the preceding three years. In fact, not since 1918 or 1920 has the April or May pneumonia death rate for Syracuse been as high as they were in 1928. The fact that only eleven deaths from influ-

enza were recorded in the six months period indicates the absence of the epidemic form of the disease. The Syracuse experience is generally similar to that of the country in general.*

Syracuse also experienced a continuation of the epidemic wave of measles which began about January, 1926. The decline in the number of cases in June, 1928, as compared with the two years preceding, as well as its total recorded incidence, presages the end of this epidemic wave. Previous epidemics in Syracuse have lasted not longer than two successive years. Scarlet fever, whooping cough and

chicken pox were also more prevalent during the first half of 1928 than in the corresponding period of 1927. The

*See United States Public Health Service: Public Health Reports for Aug. 3, 1928. Statistical Bulletins of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for June and July, 1928.

recorded cancer death rate was considerably higher than in any previous year.

Cattaraugus County also experienced a higher prevalence of some communicable diseases, chiefly measles and whooping cough. The death rate from heart disease was higher than that for 1927, although, as pointed out above, the death rate from respiratory causes was not in excess of the seasonal expectancy.



THE infant mortality rate in both Syracuse and Cattaraugus for the first six months of 1928 maintained a relatively low level, as the accompanying table shows:

The infant mortality rate for Syracuse was unusually high in April and May. Whether or not this was due to the respiratory conditions which resulted in an increased mortality at other ages in the same months cannot be determined until more detailed data are at hand.

The tuberculosis death rate in Cattaraugus County continued on the low level of 1925-1927. Without comparable statistics for Syracuse, since the

Deaths of children under one year of age, per 1,000 live births (infant mortality) by months, January to June, in Syracuse and in Cattaraugus County, 1925-1928.

Month	1925	1926	1927	1928
Syracuse				
Total for six months	71.4	76.8	64.0	67.8
January...	79.4	37.8	70.2	39.0
February..	60.2	83.1	107.6	49.6
March....	64.0	108.1	58.8	83.3
April.....	104.3	53.0	62.7	95.6
May.....	67.1	85.5	37.2	92.1
June.....	55.9	89.5	49.3	42.2

Cattaraugus County

Total for six months	1925	1926	1927	1928
Total for six months	58.6	81.2	54.0	63.1
January...	56.0	37.3	77.6	57.1
February..	76.1	75.6	37.0	78.4
March....	71.4	77.6	104.8	115.0
April.....	110.2	117.6	30.5	56.0
May.....	25.0	88.5	15.5	56.0
June.....	23.8	91.7	61.4	36.0

reports on deaths of Syracuse residents in the Onondaga Sanatorium have not yet been made available, it is difficult to make any definite comment; it appears, however, that the reported tuberculosis death rate for the first half of 1928 is slightly higher than for the corresponding period in 1925, 1926, or 1927.

THE Assembly Room of the Bellevue-Yorkville Health Center will be used during the academic year 1928-1929 as a meeting room for a course on the Principles and Problems of the Public Health Movement which will be offered by Columbia University Extension in cooperation with the De Lamar Institute of Public Health and the National Health Council. The course will be given under the direction of Dr. Philip P. Jacobs, Publicity Director of the National Tuberculosis Association, and is designed to give the student "a broad cultural and informational background on the principal problems of the public health movement."



ON July 1, Edgar Sydenstricker, who has had charge of the office of statistical investigations of the United States Public Health Service for a number of years, became director of the division of research of the Milbank Memorial Fund. Two years ago he was authorized by Surgeon General Hugh S. Cumming to act as consultant to the Fund on statistical phases of the New York Health Demonstrations. As director of research of the

Fund, Mr. Sydenstricker still retains his status as statistician in the Service, acting in an advisory capacity on its statistical work and assisting in its epidemiological and statistical studies. The new arrangement again evidences the interest which Dr. Cumming, who is a member of the Advisory Council, has shown in the Demonstrations since their inception as well as his interest in the development of the new division of research.

EDGAR SYDENSTRICKER,
*appointed on July 1, 1928, as director
of the division of research of the Milbank
Memorial Fund.*

