

## IN THIS ISSUE

NEW diagnostic criteria and special techniques for appraising nutritional status are furnishing the means for answering the questions "How prevalent are deficiency states among various population groups and what is the nature of these deficiency states?" The results of special examinations for nutritional status on nearly 1,200 industrial workers are presented and discussed by Henry Borsook, Elmer Alpert, and Geoffrey L. Keighley in a report entitled "Nutritional Status of Aircraft Workers in Southern California, Clinical and Laboratory Findings." Since these were presumably healthy men at work, no cases of frank acute deficiency diseases were expected and none were found. On the other hand, all those examined showed either clinical signs or laboratory evidence of mild to moderately severe deficiency, usually chronic, of one or more nutrients. The prevalence of specific deficiencies varied greatly and was affected by the great variation in sensitivity of the criteria applied for diagnosing mild deficiencies. Thus, 2 per cent of the group gave clinical evidence of severe niacin deficiency; 11 per cent had hemoglobin values indicative of mild anemia; 32 per cent had plasma ascorbic acid concentration below 0.4 mg. per cent; 9 per cent showed facial dermatitic signs of riboflavin deficiency but nearly every person had some degree of corneal vascularity associated with riboflavin deficiency; and, by the criterion of conjunctival thickening or opacity for vitamin A deficiency, 50 per cent of the men had grossly visible localized conjunctival elevation and the remainder showed some degree of opacity or translucency on biomicroscopic examination. These findings corroborate evidence from dietary studies that few persons consistently eat a diet which furnishes entirely adequate amounts of all essential nutrients.



The rising cost of food during the past two years has affected all families in the United States. In the article "Recent Changes in Income and

Food Expenditures Among Tuberculous Families in Harlem," by Jean Downes, present level of income and food expenditures in a group of families are described and compared with income and food expenditure in 1940. The purpose of the investigation was to learn whether income in the families had increased on the average in proportion to the known increase in the cost of food. Since tuberculous families constitute a population in most imminent danger of contracting the disease, their level of living in relation to changes in the cost of living should be a matter of concern to those interested in the control of tuberculosis.



Because of the relationship between nutritional status and general resistance to infection, improvement in the diets of families exposed to infectious tuberculosis has been one of the points of emphasis in an experimental program for control of the disease among Negroes. In the article "A Study of Food Habits of Tuberculous Families in a Harlem Area of New York City," by Jean Downes, the quality of the diets is described and the changes in quality brought about through the teaching of the public health nurse are evaluated. Less than 10 per cent of the families studied had dietary patterns corresponding to a recommended standard. However, it was demonstrated that improvement in food habits can be obtained in families where sufficient emphasis is placed upon teaching what constitutes a good diet.



The lack of satisfactory data and the complexities of the problem have deterred attempts at constructing life tables for populations classified by socio-economic characteristics. Dr. Christopher Tietze has made a contribution in this field in his article "Life Tables for Social Classes in England." His basic data consisted of mortality rates of occupied and retired males, sixteen years of age and over, by age and occupational class. These materials were available from British official statistics for the triennium 1930-1932. For younger ages, the occupational class of the father was used as the basis for classification. Mortality rates for males under two years of age were available by occupational class of the father. The occupational differentials at ages 2-15 were estimated by assuming that the mortality rate for each occupational class deviated in a given direction and degree from the known rate for all males at the age con-

sidered. Despite the limitations of the data, the author's final results on class differences in survival rates and expectation of life appear to be reasonable.



There is today an acute shortage of adequately trained nursing personnel. When the needs of the armed forces are satisfied, the remaining nurses can meet urgent civilian needs only if their services are distributed among the various elements of the population on the basis of need for care. The article "Variation in Nursing Service With Family Income and Size of City," by Selwyn D. Collins, presents data on the frequency of illness and nursing care in 8,758 white families in 130 localities in eighteen states. Nursing of any kind (private duty or visiting nurse) showed greater frequency in high and low-income groups than in the middle-income levels. Morbidity data should form the basis for planning a wise distribution of nursing service to meet civilian needs and this article provides factual information which is of present value.