

## IN THIS ISSUE

CALCIUM is believed to be one of the more prevalent deficiencies in the American diet, but no simple, sensitive test is available for the diagnosis of early or mild manifestations of calcium deficiency. Because of the great importance of adequate or optimal calcium intake for health, as shown by Sherman and others, this lack of a practical diagnostic method for routine examinations is a significant gap in the new science of diagnosis of mild or subacute deficiency states. In an investigation of the nutritional status of several thousand adolescents in New York City, which emphasized the evaluation of various methods which have been suggested for diagnosis of mild deficiencies, a test for the neuromuscular response to galvanic stimuli was included to study its value in detecting mild calcium deficiency. An analysis of this test is presented by Gilbert W. Beebe in the article "Neuromuscular Response to Galvanic Current as a Guide to the Adequacy of Calcium Nutrition of Adolescents" which is the fourteenth in the series on Medical Evaluation of Nutritional Status. Limitations of the data available for an evaluation of the tests are discussed, and the conclusion is reached that this Study furnished no evidence that the neuromuscular response to galvanic stimulation provides a satisfactory basis for appraising calcium nutrition of groups of adolescents.



The article, "The Frequency of Doctors' Prescriptions and of Laboratory and Related Services in the Treatment of Illness," by Selwyn D. Collins, presents data showing the use of medicines procured by doctor's prescription, by druggist's recommendation, and by purchase over the counter without either of these procedures. The frequency with which laboratory and X-ray services and physiotherapy were used in the diagnosis or treatment of illness is also presented.

Some medicine was procured for 58 per cent of all illnesses reported in the survey of 8,758 white families. The minor respiratory diseases were the most frequent cause for procuring medicine of all the various types; communicable diseases, minor digestive diseases, and accidents were also important among the diseases that lead to the purchase of medicine. The data are shown by sex, by income class, and by size of community.