

IN THIS ISSUE

THE application of medical knowledge available for early diagnosis of disease in presumably healthy persons has lagged much behind the progress that has been made in this field of preventive medicine. Public health and medical programs for the early detection and care of the tuberculous individual have demonstrated the need and value of this approach in the control of tuberculosis. Results of the examinations of selectees for Army service have shown how numerous are the health problems that can be uncovered in apparently well individuals if thorough examinations are made. In an article entitled "A Program of Preventive Medicine for the Individual," Dr. Milton I. Roemer summarizes the principal preventive measures available for control of disease, and directs attention not only to the importance of expanding the traditional public health practices for environmental control of disease and mass prophylaxis but also to the need for a preventive approach to the increasing problem of degenerative diseases.

"It is the purpose of this paper," writes Dr. Roemer, "to take inventory of these known preventive measures with a rough estimate of what their cost would be as part of an organized group medical service." For the services suggested, Dr. Roemer estimates an annual cost of about \$5.40 per capita. The choice of services is based on "the principle of selective procedures, adjusted to particular demographic groups," that is, the content of the health examination is not the same for all persons but is adjusted to individuals on the basis of sex, age, geographic location, and possibly other factors to detect those diseases which experience has shown are most likely to occur.



Improvement in the nutritional status of families exposed to infectious tuberculosis has been one of the objectives of an experimental program for the control of the disease among Negroes. The article, "An Experi-

ment in Nutrition Teaching by Public Health Nurses," by Jean Downes and Anne Baranovsky describes the diets of sixty tuberculous families in a Harlem area of New York City in 1943 before and after special nutrition teaching was given by the public health nurse.

Significant increases were found in the use of specific foods after teaching; the greatest increases occurred in the use of green or yellow vegetables and in the use of all vegetables. A comparison of the reported use of five food groups with the dietary pattern recommended by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council showed that a greater proportion of the families had diets equal to or above the recommended standard after the teaching period than before special instruction was given. An analysis of the content of the nurses' teaching revealed that on the whole most families needing advice about the use of specific foods were given such advice.

The public health nurse has an unusual opportunity to give dietary instruction to families with serious health problems and it is desirable and feasible that her teaching program should emphasize the betterment of food habits as one important preventive health measure.



During the past fifteen years there has been an enormous increase in the use of field surveys for collecting first-hand data on given situations. Expansion in work of this type has occurred not only in governmental agencies but also in research organizations and commercial firms. Although individuals responsible for specific investigations may employ the means at hand for testing the accuracy of their data to their own satisfaction, only a few systematic analyses of accuracy in field surveys have been published. In this issue P. K. Whelpton and Clyde V. Kiser present an article on the completeness and accuracy of a household survey in Indianapolis which was undertaken for the purpose of locating couples with qualifications for inclusion in a more intensive study. The analysis is made for a series of rather simple questions that were asked in both investigations and is carried through by certain characteristics of the informant. The article is the third to appear under the general title "Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility."