

NINETY YEARS AGO, NOVEMBER 1918

From October 1918 through December 1919, because of World War I, the Rhode Island Medical Society suspended publication of the Journal. The Society's business manager and 2 members of the Editorial Staff had gone into service. "The faithful guard, who assumed extra duties at home that others might go to the front, found that the publication of the Medical Journal would be the straw which would eventually break the camel's back. Consequently they wisely decided not to attempt it."

FIFTY YEARS AGO, NOVEMBER 1958

In "Bladder Neck Obstruction in Children," Lt. Edward H. Ray, Jr, MC USNR, Chief of Urological Service, US Naval Hospital, Newport, discussed the pathology, incidence, symptoms, diagnosis and treatment. "Any abnormality of the voiding pattern or any history of a urinary tract infection in a child should arouse suspicion that obstructive uropathy may exist."

Herman Kabat, MD, and Abraham Saltzman, MD, submitted "Electromyography – Aid to Diagnosis of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis and Motor Root Compression Syndromes with [3] Case Reports." The authors concluded: "Electromyography may show fibrillation in all extremities in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, even in the absence of muscular atrophy."

F.G. Ruest, MD, Director, Division of Tuberculosis Control, Rhode Island Department of Health, and Jean C. MacCorison, Executive Director, RI Tuberculosis and Health Association, reported on "Non-Hospitalized Tuberculous Patients in RI," a study undertaken with the US Public Health Service, the RI Department of TB Control, and the RI TB and Health Association. Of 257 patients who met the study criteria, 123 were "active and probably active;" 26 were "presumably active;" 108 were "other than active with drugs prescribed." One-third of active cases were under no medical supervision; 53% of active and presumably active cases had had no bacteriological report in the preceding 6 months. Standard regulations called for physicians to make the diagnosis, then report patients to a public health nurse, who would arrange to visit the patient. Forty percent of patients had not been referred to the nurse. "Only one-third of the active and presumably active patients at home were living under conditions conducive to adequate care of the patient and protection of his family and the public." The Report recommended: establish treatment facilities in outpatient departments of community hospitals for patients who refuse hospitalization and/or cannot pay for drug therapy; x-ray adult contacts of patients routinely every 6 months; encourage every newly diagnosed patient to go into the hospital for a brief work-up; increase use of the intradermal tuberculin test as a screening procedure.

An Editorial praised the Providence Rescue Squads, first established in 1943. The first year, the public called the rescue squad 254 times; in 1956, the public made 3,638 calls.

A second Editorial urged polio vaccinations. Of the Rhode Island population younger than age 40, 53% had not had the basic 3 injections; more than a third had had no vaccine at all. The first 9 months of 1958, the state had 1815 cases of polio, 258 more than the same period in 1957.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, NOVEMBER 1983

Wendy J. Smith, managing editor, contributed "The Nicotine Fix: A Personal Perspective." She traced the rise of the industry to James Buchanan Duke, "an impoverished former Confederate soldier [who] refined a method for the mass production of cigarettes in the 1880s." (He didn't smoke.) By 1888 Duke was selling 740 million cigarettes annually; in 1890 Duke formed the American Tobacco Company; in 1911 trust-busting legislation divided American Tobacco into 4 companies. In 1980 Americans smoked more than 4 billion cigarettes annually. In 1964 the US Surgeon General reported on the harmful effects: the mortality rate for smokers was 70% higher than for non-smokers. The author recounted her "failure to kick the habit." She argued that the key to success of anti-smoking campaigns was to "prevent adolescents from smoking that first cigarette."

William Bennett, MD, Editor of the Harvard Medical School Health Letter, contributed "The Nicotine Fix" (copyright-Harvard Magazine): "The industry is based on the principle of selling perhaps the most addicting of substances to minors."

William D. Torres, MD, and Leonard J. Tiedman, MD, in "Computed Tomography in the Management of Head and Neck Cancers," posited that "New applications were expected to play an invaluable role in the early detection, management and follow-up of such tumors."



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