



NINETY YEARS AGO, APRIL 1921

Dr. Creighton W. Skelton brings to light before the March meeting of the Rhode Island Medical Society a number of disturbing cases regarding factory owners under-reporting workplace accidents by having nurses and other first-aid specialists see patients outside official doctors' hours in which to avoid having said incidents recorded. He notes that reporting this practice to the management resulted in his dismissal and while a formal report to the Board of Health resulted in a return to proper procedures, it was only a short-lived return. He then cites a number of cases in which when a patient is seen only by a nurse or a first aid attendant, and then returned to the production floor, the patient often worsens and what would have been a simple visit with the company doctor has turned into something much more serious.

Dr. Skelton also makes a call for higher quality and greater diversity in papers presented to the Medical Society. Among his entreaties are: "Let the x-ray men show their light, and let not the Otologist forget that the general man is as much interested in otitis media as he himself is. As a diversion a paper by Garvin on Single Tax would be entertaining. You could play safe by limited him to thirty-five minutes."

In a journal article, Dr. Jacob Kelley encourages the use of x-rays to discover fractures frequently overlooked and of the importance of an experienced Roentgenologist in reading and interpretation.

In an editorial there is a call for reform in the State of Rhode Island in regards to the duties and powers of Medical Examiners and the law under which they operate. Too often, Medical Examiners make pronouncements of death by natural causes without the benefit of autopsies or detailed examinations. This practice is due mostly to the costs associated with autopsies which cannot be performed without the approval of the Attorney General who, in turn, will not grant permission unless strong evidence is presented of death by anything other than natural causes. The author calls for a greater role for the State Pathologist in performing autopsies as typical Medical Examiners are not qualified, and that the cost is not too great for the State.

Dr. Robert B. Greenough of Boston addressed the Providence Medical Society on "The Modern Use of Radium," which was "a careful, straight-forward statement on the different effects of radium on living tissue the manner of using it and the present view of its value in the treatment of cancer and other neoplastic conditions in the human body."

FIFTY YEARS AGO, APRIL 1961

In a report prepared by the Washington Office of the American Medical Association, it states that the US Public Health Service and the National Foundation are working together in an all-out drive to get as many persons as possible to take Salk vaccine shots before the summer polio season starts. It further notes that the Sabin live polio vaccine is in short supply and that the Salk vaccine drive is aimed mostly at children and young adults in lower economic groups.

Dr. Laurence A. Senseman suggests that psychiatry is being oversimplified—mostly by drug companies eager to sell their products. The current rage is for "psychic energizers" from a group known as mono-oxidase inhibitors. Dr. Senseman goes on to identify different types of depression and treatments.

Dr. Seebert J. Goldowsky presents excerpts from his "Israel Diary" in which he relates his experiences as part of a hospital-to-hospital medical exchange program between Miriam Hospital and Poriah Government Hospital in Tiberias, Israel. He is impressed both by the industry of the people, and the sights and foods of the area.

Dr. Reuben C. Bates discusses certified milk in Providence and outlines the various classifications and standards available.

In "Through the Microscope," it is reported that Dr. David Littman of West Roxbury, MA VA hospital and Harvard Medical School and Dr. Hubert V. Pipberger of Mt. Alto VA hospital in Washington, DC and Georgetown School of Medicine have used a computer to screen electrocardiograms for heart abnormalities with a 95-100% accuracy rate in diagnostic decisions.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, APRIL 1985

Dr. Richard H. Egdahl asks "Should We Shrink the Health Care System?" and suggests that a way to do so would be to reduce the number of hospital beds and healthcare providers. The author notes how many companies are restructuring their medical plans to include incentives to reduce the use of copayments, deductibles, and less comprehensive coverage.

Robert J. Canny, Executive Director of Hospice Care of Rhode Island, writes about the history of hospice care benefits under the Medicare program. He notes their ten-year history in the United States, and how Hospice Care of Rhode Island was the first certified Medicare program in New England.

In a recent issue of the American Journal of Diseases of Children, Dr. Karen M. Kaplan of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine suggests that herpes infections in children should "always be considered as a possible indicator of child abuse." She and her colleagues note that sexual abuse was documented in four of six children under the age of 13 years who were treated for genital herpes simplex virus.