Ninety Years Ago, July 1921

The journal issues covering the months of July, August, and September of 1921 are covered in a single issue. This is due to a printer's strike and an "enforced quiescence."

Alex M. Burgess, MD, writes of issues surrounding the treatment of diabetes—in particular, revelations that have occurred within the past ten years. It is essentially distilled into two factors: undernutrition and education. For one, Dr. Burgess discusses acquiring a "systematic underfeeding sufficient tolerance for food so that on a diet which will produce enough energy and supply enough proteins to maintain physical efficiency, one can still be free from abnormal or increasing amounts of blood sugar with its attending symptoms and deleterious effects." Furthermore, he stresses the need to instruct and educate the diabetic on the importance of maintaining a controlled diet. He notes that "There is perhaps no disease in which the success of the treatment depends more upon the patient than it does in the case of diabetes."

An editorial looks at cigarette smoking among youths and concludes: "Young people who use cigarettes always show symptoms of poisoning such as pallor, dullness in activity, inaccuracy in reasoning, and the capacity to carry out fine work is lacking. Tobacco is more or less a dangerous narcotic to the senses and higher brain activities, and no person can be in complete possession of his faculties and power of control, and exercise the highest efficiency possible who uses tobacco."

Fifty Years Ago, July 1961

In the section marked "The Washington Scene" it is noted that the American Medical Association supported the Kennedy Administration's proposal to provide $750 million in matching funds for construction of medical, dental, public health and osteopathic schools. A letter from the AMA to the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee states: "As an Association of 179,000 practicing physicians, we are vitally interested in maintaining the high quality of medical education in the United States because of its direct relationship to medical care. For over a century, the American Medical Association has been actively and effectively engaged in the improvement of medical education in the United States. It can now be said, with assurance, that medical education in this country is superior to that found anywhere else in the world."

Abstracts from papers written by Rhode Island medical professionals include "Demyelinating encephalomyelitis in a case of tetanus treated with antitoxin" by Harold W. Williams and Francis H. Chaffee, and "Herpes simplex" method of Arthur B. Kern, and the 1915 "Before and after Lister" "Demyelinating encephalomyelitis in a case of tetanus treated with antitoxin" (1915) by William W. Keen.

Alex M. Burgess, MD, (who contributed to the July–September 1921 journal) discusses the changing scene in medical education and practice. He opines, "Times have changed but man has remained essentially the same." He begins with his days at Harvard Medical School in 1909 under Dr. Charles V. Chapin, and moves forward in time, stopping here and there to examine such issues as specialty boards, expansion of hospital services, and the development of group practice. He looks ahead to the development of new and improved techniques, equipment, drugs, and education, but also notes the rising costs of medical and hospital care.

Several authors discuss medical crises occurring in the forms of over-regulation and big government. E. Vincent Askey, MD, makes a call to arms thusly following a alarming buildup of threats to modern society: "I want to call you to arms in a war that has two fronts. We must continue to battle for preservation of our medical freedoms against the inroads of governmental intrusion, while at the same time we must strengthen our assault to provide the finest medical care for all our people.

Twenty-Five Years Ago, July 1986

Kathryn Cullen, BSN, MS, talks about the goals of the Parkinson's Disease Referral and Information Center. She discusses problems with timely and correct diagnoses, how to discuss issues surrounding Parkinson's, and challenges for the patient and family. By creating an atmosphere of acceptance and support, the Center hopes to ease the burden and find the cure through research, information, and building networks.

In keeping with the theme on Parkinson's disease, author Robert Bernen pens a thoughtful, moving piece dealing with recognizing the onset of the disease and his final acceptance of the disease's presence. He concludes with: "I always disliked people with tremors or tics and avoided their company. Now I have the tremor and would avoid myself if I could. Instead I go around everywhere with myself just as before, resist the recluse tendency, cultivate a sense of humor to put others at their ease, and try to accept this new condition of life. The tremor and the loss of spontaneity have been the hardest things to accept. They make my life look to me like an awkward coordination of two unlike personalities, one who shakes while the other, embarrassed, looks on helplessly; one who wills, while the other reluctantly obeys; a constant conflict of selves. I may seem strange to talk of being two persons, but that is the way having Parkinson's disease feels to me."

Joseph Friedman, MD, discusses recent research advances in Parkinson's disease in the first of two parts. His piece is subtitled, "Chance discovery has provided animal models for research." These test animals will allow for better analyses prior to human trials. Robert Rafal, MD, presents a piece on the mental disorders of Parkinson's disease.