



## **NINETY YEARS AGO, AUGUST, 1922**

W.T. Buffum, Jr., MD, examines rickets and tetany in infancy beginning by a characterization of rickets as softening and deformities in the bony structure, malnutrition, anemia, and weakness of the voluntary and involuntary muscles which interferes with development and resistance to intercurrent disease, and noting that when recovery takes place, there are likely to be serious deformities unless proper orthopedic and medical treatment has been instituted.

Alex M. Burgess, MD, look at aspects of the treatment of diabetes, stressing the importance of knowledge of the disease and treatment for the general practitioner. Burgess also notes that newer treatments have been successful in increasing the average lifespan of the diabetic patient by nearly forty percent.

An editorial looks at two recent addresses by recognized leaders of the medical community focusing on the relationship between the profession and the public, starting with newly minted AMA president George E. deSchweinitz, MD, and his observation that a transition from individual to organized practice already has begun." He further states that "the public is not satisfied with a service that is devoted only to the cure of maladies and the mending of injuries, but is very much alive to the advantages of the prevention of disease and the conservation of health."

Another editorial returns to the evisceration of the chiropractor as a legitimate medical professional. Now the "irregular practitioner" has taken advantage of new technology in the form of x-ray machines in a pseudoscientific manner in order to impress certain types of patients. In particular, they pounce upon any small chance irregularity in an x-ray in which a patient in laying and claim it to be an indication that the spine is "out of plumb" and in need of their brand of treatment.

## **FIFTY YEARS AGO, AUGUST, 1962**

George J. Garceau, MD, presents a piece on congenital muscular torticollis subtitled "Hematoma, fact or myth?" His study concludes that the theory of simple faulty position in utero, as a cause of congenital muscular torticollis, is not supported by the evidence available, and that hematoma has never been observed to produce torticollis. The theory of ischemia, partial and temporary, of the lower two thirds of the sternocleidomastoid muscle, and the role of the ansa cervicalis nerve deserves further investigation. The author signs off by stating that the theory of trauma, hemorrhage, and hematoma should be removed from textbooks and that the hematoma theory appears to be a myth.

Aaron W. Christensen, MD, discusses "Prevention – a Challenge To the Medical Profession" including a look at the need for private-public partnership in dealing with preventing disability. Most work in rehabilitation involves attempts to reverse existing disabilities, a very high percentage of which could

have been prevented in the first place. He asks how physicians could change the picture and how public health officials can help. In regards to the patient, he writes, "If prevention is our goal, we must deal at the outset, not merely as a whole. Does he understand the importance of exercise? Is he motivated to keep them at them regularly, no matter how painful they may be? As the drugs relieve his discomfort, will he slip back to old habits? How can follow up be assured?" The author concludes noting that while he has asked many questions, he is confident that as physicians think about the issues and exchange views, that useful patterns will emerge.

A news item presents a statement from the Council on Foods and Nutrition of the American Medical Association in response to the sale and distribution of confections and carbonated beverages in school lunchrooms. "The availability of confections and carbonated beverages on school premises may tempt children to spend lunch money for them and lead to poor food habits. Their high energy value and continual availability are likely to affect children's appetites for regular meals."

## **TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, AUGUST, 1987**

A call is made for a reassessment of the certificate of need program in Rhode Island in a piece written by H. Denham Scott, MD, MPH, John T. Tierney, MSW, William J. Waters, PhD, Donald C. Williams, MA, and John X. Donahue, MPA. They note that change in the health care field is both rapid and unpredictable, and thus it is not the time to throw away tools, including the certificate of need and its ability to aid in health care cost control and quality assurance. As a part of the 175th anniversary of the medical society, the journal reprints a public lecture from 1804 by Benjamin Waterhouse, MD with the lengthy title [verbatim]: "Cautions to young persons concerning health in a Public Lecture delivered at the close of the Medical Course in the Chapel of Cambridge containing the General Doctrine of Chronic Diseases; shewing the Evil Tendency of the Use of Tobacco upon Young Persons; more especially the Pernicious Effects of Smoking Cigarrs; with observations on the Use of Ardent and Vinous Spirits in general." The fascinating reproduction closes with, "To conclude. The moral, to be deduced from our whole Lecture is, the *necessity of avoiding all* predisposing causes to NERVOUS DISORDERS; and obviating the remote causes of CONSUMPTION. Quit then this pernicious habit, I entreat you. Take all your cigarrs and tobacco, and in some calm evening carry them on to the common, and there sacrifice them to health, cleanliness, and decorum. But, should perversity withstand all the arguments adduced, we have yet one in reserve that is irresistible. The dangerous tendency of these practices no one can doubt; therefore, abandon with custom, LEST YOU PIERCE WITH ANGUISH THE HEARTS OF YOUR AFFECTIONATE PARENTS!"