

In RIMJ 60 years ago: 'Did You Know?'

MARY KORR
RIMJ MANAGING EDITOR

Six decades ago, the editors of the *Rhode Island Medical Journal* (RIMJ) published news briefs on public health statistics, vaccine data, and population and employment trends under the heading "Did You Know?"

Below are samples from 1960–1968 issues of RIMJ.

Did You Know?

Tuberculosis

- That there were more than 55,000 new active cases of tuberculosis reported in 1960, a rate of almost 31 cases per 100,000 and a five percent decline over 1959.
- The authorities say with the present available means of control, the rate should be a decline of 10 percent.

Hunters/gunshot wounds

- 400 hunters will lose their lives as a result of accidental gunshot wounds, and that six times that many will be injured by gunshot in 1964.
- Of America's 17 million hunters, 1.3 million are women.
(*Health Insurance Institute*)

Nation Gets Younger, Older

- The population of the United States is exploding, younger and aging – all at once.
- By 1970, the number of young people under the age of 20 will reach 87 million people according to population experts.
- People 65 and older will reach an estimated 80 million by 1970. By then half the population of this country will be under 20 or over 65.

Frostbite

- According to the American Medical Association, the first signs of frostbite are "pins and needles" prickly feeling, then numbness, with the skin turning white or gray, and later red.
- Thawing the frozen tissues can best be accomplished by getting the victim indoors into a warm room.
- The frozen part should be treated with gentleness – not rubbed or massaged.
- Rubbing snow or ice water on the frozen part does more harm than good by delaying thawing.

POLIO IN THE UNITED STATES 1946–1965

	Total Cases
1946*	25,698
1949*	42,033
1952*	57,879
1954*	38,476
1955* Salk Vaccine In Use	28,985
1956	15,140
1957	5,485
1958	5,787
1959	8,425
1960	3,190
1961 Sabin Vaccine In Use	1,312
1962	910
1963	449
1964	116
1965**	59

*Immediate Pre-Vaccine Peak Years

**Provisional

Source: U.S. Department of Health,
Education and Welfare
Public Health Service

Polio strikes 59 times in '65, record low

- Poliomyelitis struck 59 times last year in the United States, the Health Insurance Institute said recently. This is a record low for polio, the dread disease which only a few years ago took a heavy toll in this country.
- The 1965 incidence nearly halves the 116 cases registered in 1964, the previous low year for polio.
- The Institute, citing from recent U.S. Public Health Service provisional data, noted that ten years before – in 1955, when the Salk Vaccine was approved for general use – 28,985 polio cases were reported. (See **Figure 1**, above.)

Poison

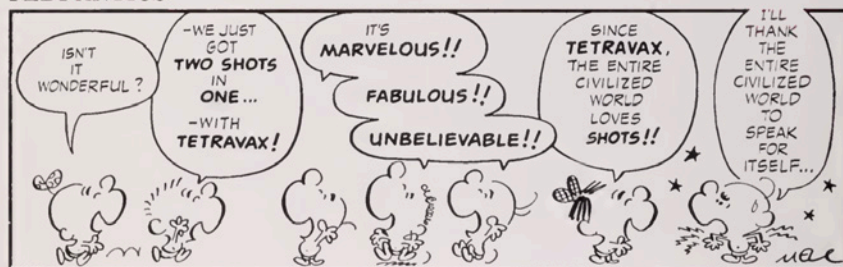
- Some 500,000 children accidentally poison themselves each year.
- Poison is the No. 1 killer of preschool children; aspirin accounts for most poisoning deaths of children under five.
- Other hazardous products are cleaning agents, paint, turpentine, and petroleum-based products.

Employment Outlook

- Employment outlook for persons interested in health service occupations should be exceedingly bright for the next ten years.
- There should be ample opportunities through 1975 for those wishing to be doctors, dentists, nurses, hospital administrators, dietitians, physical therapists, etc.
- An estimated 40,000 nurses a year will be needed through 1970 to fill new positions and replace nurses who retire or die.

Poliomyelitis-Diphtheria-Pertussis-Tetanus

PEDI-ANTICS



TETRAVAX®

DIPHTHERIA AND TETANUS TOXOIDS WITH PERTUSSIS AND POLIOMYELITIS VACCINES

now you can immunize against more diseases...with fewer injections

Vintage Vaccine Ad – 1960

In the January 1960 issue of the *Rhode Island Medical Journal* this cartoon ran advertising the benefits of Tetravax, a single inoculation with combined diphtheria and tetanus toxoids and pertussis and poliomyelitis vaccines, manufactured by Merck & Co.

Vintage Editorial in RIMJ: 1967

WORTH A TRIAL IN NARRAGANSETT BAY?

We are indebted to The New York Times of May 21, 1967 for calling attention to a report in the current issue of *Life Sciences*, a technical journal, of a type of marine sponge that literally soaks up and kills harmful coliform bacteria from polluted sea water.

Three scientists from the Republic Aviation Division of Fairchild Hiller Corp. of Farmingdale, Long Island, have described the redbear sponge, a marine animal that lives along the East Coast from Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras. This sponge has a voracious appetite for *Escherichia coli*, a prime index of water pollution. Peter Madri, a microbiologist, and his co-workers Dr. George Claus and Steven Kunen of the same laboratory have demonstrated that "the capacity of the sponge to remove and eventually kill *Escherichia coli* is over 30 times greater" than sea water alone.

The investigators believe that if these sponges could be cultured in sufficient numbers bacterial

pollution in bays and estuaries would be "significantly reduced." Redbear sponges collected in waters off Long Island were placed in large tanks into which pollutants were dumped. After 6 days only 5,000 bacteria per cubic centimeter were found in the experimental tanks, while in control tanks the count was about 1,000,000. A sample of sponge contained about 750,000 organisms, compared with less than 100 when first placed in the tank.

Madri believes that "If sponges could be planted near the shellfish beds they would probably keep the water in and around the beds clean." He is of the opinion that typhoid, salmonella, and shigella organisms would be devoured and killed with equal effectiveness. He added that "no Federal, state, or local government agency had shown any interest" in the idea of sponge seeding.

We suggest that the Rhode Island Department of Natural Resources and the University of Rhode Island take notice.



Redbear sponge, a marine species that lives in the Atlantic Ocean, from Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras.

[WIKIMEDIA, CREATIVE COMMONS]