

Victorian Cancer News

Registered in Australia for transmission by post as a periodical.

*A News Letter issued by the Public Education
Sub-Committee of the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria*

No. 25 ● JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1966

EDITORIAL:

LUNG CANCER

WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT THIS IMPENDING NATIONAL DISASTER?

During the Second World War, 27,000 Australian men gave up their lives in their country's defence. Many more than this number of Australians (40,000) can expect to die from lung cancer in the next ten years.

All responsible medical authorities agree that most of these deaths can be attributed to the habit of cigarette smoking, yet in the face of a national disaster on this scale there is still widespread complacency.

Australia is far behind most other advanced countries in its control measures. In the United States, the self-imposed advertising code of the tobacco manufacturers did not deter the government from legislating that cigarette packages must bear the legend "Caution — cigarette smoking may be hazardous to your health". In Great Britain no advertising of cigarettes at all is permitted on television, and the government sponsors an extensive anti-smoking campaign in all media. In Italy and Denmark all advertising of cigarettes is forbidden, and in New Zealand stringent controls are applied.

In October last year, the Acting Minister of Health (Mr. Sinclair) announced that the cigarette companies, the television stations and the Federal Government had agreed on a voluntary code of cigarette advertising, the aim of which was to prevent specific appeal to young people and non-smokers. When announcing the code, Mr. Sinclair stated that the best way to deal with the problem was to "educate the public to the facts" and "leave the decision to them".

Most reasonable people would agree with this, but two important questions are still unanswered.

"Should smoking education have to compete for the attention of the public against huge advertising expenditure by cigarette companies?" and "Who is going to finance such education on the scale necessary to even counteract the effect of advertising?"

A deputation sponsored by the Australian Cancer Society was received by the Commonwealth Minister of Health (Mr. Swartz) in November. He agreed to give consideration to the following recommendations of the deputation:

That advertising of cigarettes, particularly on television, be effectively controlled.

That the Commonwealth undertake an educational programme through radio and television on the risks associated with smoking.

That the Commonwealth provide funds to assist State Governments in conducting long term educational programmes on smoking and to carry out evaluative studies.

That to give direction to anti-smoking programmes, the Commonwealth undertakes a large-scale representative survey of smoking habits of young Australians and of the factors associated with early development of the smoking habit.

That the Commonwealth Office of Information Film Unit be authorised to produce a short colour film on smoking, directed to young adolescents, for free distribution to accredited organisations engaged in cancer education work with young people.

That an appropriate Commonwealth agency undertake research into the carcinogenic potentiality of cigarettes containing Australian tobaccos manufactured in Australia with the ultimate objective of determining minimum health safety standards for cigarettes.

At the request of the deputation, Mr. Swartz issued a public statement accepting that smoking is a hazard to health (HEALTH, December, 1965).

In Victoria, the Statute Law Revision Committee upon False and Misleading Advertising considered the question of cigarettes. The Committee did not feel competent to determine whether smoking was harmful to health. However, it stated that should the Government accept proof that "cigarette smoking causes or substantially contributes to the disease of lung cancer . . . there would appear to be strong grounds for the Government to take action along the lines suggested." (i.e. strict scrutiny of the content of all cigarette advertisements).

It remains to be seen whether the Committee will regard the Federal Minister's statement as sufficient acceptance of the proof to warrant further action.

OBITUARY

Professor E. S. J. King

The Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria has suffered a grievous loss in the death of Professor E. S. J. King. He had been a valued member of the Council and several of its committees for many years. Since 1962, as Chairman of the Executive Committee, he was the Council's leading figure and spokesman.

Edgar King was distinguished in a number of fields. He was awarded the Jacksonian Prize of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, one of that College's highest distinctions, on no less than three occasions. He held the degrees of Doctor of Medicine, Master of Surgery and Doctor of Science. He was one of the few individuals who was a Fellow of both the Royal Colleges of Physicians and of Surgeons of Australasia. Such distinctions bear witness to the high regard in which he was held by his colleagues and to his intellectual capacity, but they tell little of his personality and character.

At the end of last year, on the eve of his retirement from the Chair of Pathology in the University of Melbourne, past and present members of the Department presented Professor King with a volume "Further Studies in Pathology", to which many of them contributed essays. The introduction to this book was written by a distinguished Australian scientist who has lived most of his life in England, Emeritus Professor Sir Roy Cameron, F.R.S. In the course of his preface, Sir Roy says "My friendship with Edgar has deepened as the years slipped by, and has brought me the privilege of knowing something of the profundity of his mind, his ceaseless planning for the welfare of all who have entrusted themselves to his care, and, most touching of all — his carefully hidden defiance of the buffetings of life. Disappointment and frustration have never soured or lessened his faith in young workers and the future . . . I count it a privilege to add to the store of respect which garlands this humble, patient man".

These eloquent words will bring vividly to the minds of all his friends and colleagues the personality of Professor King. His services to scientific medicine and to the cause of cancer will not be forgotten.

Young mother runs meeting singlehanded

by Carlotta Kellaway

The night when a young country mother ran a meeting in her home town of Terang singlehanded is one of the most extraordinary stories to come out of the Anti-Cancer Council's educational campaign to inform women of the new facilities for cytological screening for cervical cancer.

It is a striking example of what may be achieved by one dedicated, determined individual.

The story is told by Sister Elizabeth Warr, the nurse who has done so much to publicise the "cell test" in Victoria.

Sister Warr, who does public education tours for the Council, was there in Terang on the night when Mrs. Anne Fraser, mother of three, waited nervously for the meeting she had arranged to begin.

QUITE A NIGHT . . .

It was quite a night for Terang when the attractive young woman with burnished red hair watched over 160 people move into the C.W.A. Hall, instead of the 80 she had expected.

Some of the audience had to fetch extra chairs from the local fire brigade and kindergarten before they could sit down. Once, when the projector broke down, two women hurried out and found a local projectionist willing to help.

They came from in town and out of town (Terang is a prosperous farming area), they represented a cross-section of ages and occupations, and they asked a variety of interesting questions. It added up to a most successful meeting, says Sister Warr.

It all began for Mrs. Fraser when she read about the publicity campaign for the "cell test" in the newspaper. Like many housewives today, for some time she had been seeking some interest outside her home, but had found it too difficult to manage with small children. Now she knew what she *could* do. Here was something she could organise from within her home.

She moved into action at once — contacting the local paper, making many enquiries, getting in touch with local organisations and obtaining free advertising on the local radio station. She hired the C.W.A. Hall and carried out her one-woman campaign to its successful end.

GOOD RESPONSE

Women will continue to play a most important part in the anti-cancer campaign, says Sister Warr, who believes that a determined woman is a force to be reckoned with.

Some women (especially those with young families) go to a lot of trouble to come to her meetings on the "cell test". In Mildura, where she addressed 1,000 women in 3 days, some had travelled over 50 miles to attend.

"Afternoon meetings are the noisiest," explains Sister Warr. "I often have to shout above the noise of small children. We have everything from babies in prams to toddlers. But I don't care. I'd rather the mother came."

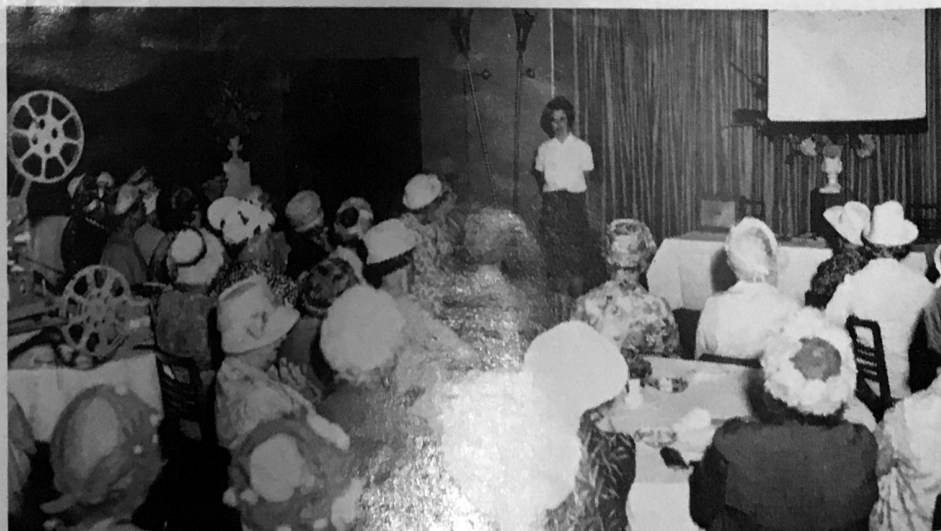
Most women attending meetings now have heard about Sister Warr. "They have read about me in the press, or seen me on TV. They know my name."

OPEN DISCUSSION

The best questions she finds are asked by those in the late 20's-40's group. They have read more about cancer and realise the campaign vitally concerns them.

Sister Warr is convinced that bringing uterine cancer out into the open is the right thing to do. She feels sure that her meetings have given many women the impetus to go along to their local doctor and ask him to take a "smear" for them.

Proof of the ever-increasing demand for "cell test" diagnosis, she concludes, is shown by figures recently released from the State Cytology Service. The number of tests handled by the Centre each week had jumped up from 70 in April (when the campaign was just beginning) to over 5,000 by December.



Sister Warr addresses a typical "cytology" meeting.



Dr. Berci (*The Age*)

High Award for Medical Photography

A film made in the Department of Experimental Surgery, Melbourne University, has won the Combined Royal Colleges' Bronze Medal (1965) for "the outstanding contribution of photography in medicine and surgery". The award is made annually by a Committee representing the Royal College of Surgeons, the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal Photographic Society.

The film, which deals with Endoscopy (the visual examination of the internal hollow organs of the body) is the fruit of 8 years of work by a team led by Dr. George Berci and an expenditure of over \$120,000 by the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria.

Dr. Berci's team has pioneered the field of endoscopic television and photography by devising cameras which can be connected to the hollow "endoscope" which is inserted into the body. Until recently it was difficult and often impossible to photograph a diseased organ to obtain a permanent record. Now that the miniature television and movie camera heads have been

developed, research and teaching in subjects related to endoscopy have been greatly advanced.

Use of the miniature TV camera now enables a number of specialists or students to view simultaneously (and greatly magnified) the area under examination. The movie camera has made possible the formation of a library of colour movie film which is invaluable for instructing doctors and students in the visual recognition of various conditions — both malignant and non-malignant. Parts of the body now on record in colour film include the inside of the lung, the gullet, stomach and larynx.

The project has been as much a triumph in engineering as it has in medicine. The three men responsible for the development of the new apparatus are Mr. L. A. Kont (Senior Technical Officer), Mr. F. Meri (instrument maker) and Mr. N. Stewart (electronics engineer).

More than one hundred enquiries have been received from medical and commercial interests overseas and it is expected that Dr. Berci's technique for television and movie photography will shortly be applied in a number of centres.

AUSTRALIAN CODE

The Australian cigarette manufacturers agreed last year to conform to a code of advertising somewhat similar to a code adopted by U.S. manufacturers two years ago. Unlike the American agreement, there appears to be no provision for enforcing the code or determining whether advertisements do in fact conform to it. The local code became effective on January 1, 1966 and applies to television advertising throughout the Commonwealth.

The Code states:

Cigarette advertising must not be aimed at any non-smoker, but must be intended to effect a change of brand among smokers.

Principal characters shown smoking cigarettes in any advertisement should not be under 25 years of age.

No cigarette advertising may be placed on television in children's programmes or immediately before or after such programmes.

No family scenes of father and/or mother smoking cigarettes in front of children may be shown.

No advertising for cigarettes may appear containing testimonials from persons who have special appeal to young people.

No advertising may claim special health properties for, or reduction of any ingredient from smoke of any cigarette unless backed by scientific authority.

Cigarette advertising may use attractive, healthy looking models or illustrations or drawings of persons who appear to be attractive and healthy, provided there is no suggestion that their attractive appearance or good health is due to cigarette smoking.

Advertisements shall not show well-known past or present athletes or sportsmen smoking cigarettes, nor anyone who has just participated in physical activity requiring stamina or athletic conditioning beyond that of normal recreation.

Cigarette advertising must not show or imply habitual or excessive smoking.

"VICTORIAN CANCER NEWS"

is published by the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, Public Education Committee. Editor: D. J. Hill. Printed by The Premier Printing Co. Pty. Ltd., Melbourne.

It will be sent free of charge to interested persons and organisations who should apply to the Public Education Officer, Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, 412 Albert Street, East Melbourne.

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REPORTED BRIEFLY

The Anti-Cancer Council's Carden Research Fellow, Dr. Donald Metcalf, has been honored by an invitation from the World Health Organization to sit on an eight-man Expert Committee on immuno-therapy in cancer. The Committee will meet in Geneva between May 30th and June 4th. It will assess results to date of immuno-therapy (utilization of the body's natural defence mechanisms) of cancer in experimental animals and in clinical trials, determine the present state of knowledge in this field and suggest lines of profitable investigation for the future.

Other members of the Committee are eminent scientists from a number of countries. They are: Dr. P. Alexander from London, Professor M. Woodruff from Edinburgh, Dr. G. Klein from Stockholm, Dr. G. Mathé from France, Dr. G. Deichman from the U.S.S.R., Dr. Benacerras from New York, and Dr. C. M. Southam from the Sloan-Kettering Institute in New York. The meeting will be chaired by Dr. H. C. Goodman, Pathology Director for W.H.O.

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One of the world's leading authorities on public education for cancer, Mr. John Wakefield, has been appointed as head of a new Social Research Centre which has been set up at the Christie Hospital and Holt Radium Institute, Manchester, U.K. The Centre, which will inquire into the causes of delay in seeking treatment for cancer, has already published material on public and professional attitudes to a screening programme for cervical cancer in the Manchester area. (*Brit. Journal of Social and Preventive Medicine*: Vol. 19, pp. 151-158, 1965).

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CANCER CAMPAIGN

The Women's Committee of the Cancer Campaign 1965 exceeded its target of \$40,000 by nearly \$4,000. At right, Mr. Justice O'Driscoll is seen presenting a cheque for \$2,000 on behalf of the Edward and Ellen Beacham Memorial, to the Committee's Chairman, Mrs. James Buchanan. This gift brought the Women's Committee total to \$43,437.70.

The Fall 1965 number of *ACS Cancer News* reports some interesting recent developments in the United States.

"A gradual but perceptible shift in cigarette smoking habits has been noted over the past five years. Despite a rise in total cigarette consumption, the U.S. Public Health Service estimates that there are now about 18 million ex-smokers. This is based on a survey which showed a drop in the proportion of adult cigarette smokers from 59 per cent in 1962 to 52 per cent in 1964. This 7-point decline, added to that shown in earlier studies, means that nearly one out of four adult American men is now an ex-cigarette smoker, according to the U.S. Surgeon General.

Although some 4,500 boys and girls begin smoking each day of the year there is a growing tendency of youngsters to postpone starting the habit. One recent study of teenagers showed only 17 per cent answering affirmatively the question: "Do you smoke cigarettes?", as compared to 36 per cent in 1958.

Physicians, significantly, are smoking far less than the general populace. There has been a drop in doctors' smoking in this country and in England to an estimated 30 per cent. A mortality study (Doll-Hill) conducted over a 10-year period (1951-1961) among British male physicians showed a 7 per cent decline in the lung cancer death rate

in contrast to a 22 per cent increase among other males — attributed, in the context of other data, to the fact that these physicians have given up smoking because they are more aware of the dangers and know enough to quit while they are ahead."

"*The New Yorker* magazine has joined *Reader's Digest* and *The Saturday Review* in the ranks of magazines that are rejecting cigarette advertisements. The magazine has not been accepting new cigarette accounts for some time and eliminated the old accounts for the July 1 issue. A spokesman said, however, that this could be a temporary measure. We are impressed with the cigarette companies' research on this, he said. But, he added, until medical science proves that cigarettes are not injurious to health or comes up with the answer, there will be no ads for cigarettes in *The New Yorker*."

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Under a grant from the Anti-Cancer Council, Dr. J. H. Colebatch visited the XIth International Paediatric Congress in Tokyo last November. Dr. Colebatch, who read a paper entitled "Experiences with Cyclical Therapy" (for leukaemia in children) also chaired the open discussion on the clinical and chemotherapy papers. It was evident that Australia is well to the fore in the successful treatment of children suffering from leukaemia.

