

## Vital Answers

# Busy Physicians Unable To Keep Up With Data

### Course Of Taped Broadcasts Carried In Area To Report Latest Developments

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In the office of a doctor in a small northwestern Ohio town lies a man with a leg severely injured in an automobile accident. Should the leg be amputated? Whether an injured person's leg should be amputated is a critical decision for any doctor to make.

The doctor has heard that, from the beginning of World War II and through the Korean conflict, military surgeons learned techniques that reduced the necessity for amputation as a result of injured anywhere from 30 to 40 per cent of the cases. What was the procedure? Unfortunately the doctor has not had an opportunity to gain this vital information.

In another small northwestern Ohio community the spinal column of a patient has been severely fractured. For proper treatment in a hospital with adequate surgical and medical facilities, the patient may need to be sent to Toledo, Cleveland, Detroit, or some other center where the facilities are available.

But how can the patient be moved without further injury that might be fatal? What is the answer? The doctor would like to know it.

#### Doctors Lack Answers

There are all too many questions involving care and treatment of such injury cases and the treatment of cases of heart disease, cancers, strokes, and related disabilities for which too many doctors do not have enough answers.

In recent years tremendous volumes of medical and surgical information have been coming at an ever-increasing rate from research and medical centers in the United States and foreign nations.

In spite of this explosion of knowledge too little of it trickles down to practicing physicians and surgeons, especially in small communities and in outlying rural areas.

#### Outstanding Speakers

The last real training the doctor has received may have been when he finished his studies as a student in a medical college and as an intern or resident in a hospital. To enhance their knowledge, many doctors try to keep abreast of new developments by reading medical journals or by attending state and national medical meetings. In the Toledo area some may attend the monthly sessions sponsored by the Northwestern Ohio Institute for Continuing Education.

Each session may last for two or three days. The principal speaker is usually an outstanding authority in his field. Speakers give a series of lecture demonstrations at Toledo hospitals and lectures at the Academy of Medicine.

This procedure is not considered adequate as a means of keeping doctors up to date on the latest advances in medical knowledge. Consequently in September a new approach was tried under the direction of Dr. Howard S. Madigan, director of the Institute, and assistant dean for continuing education at the Medical College of Ohio.

It was decided to provide doctors, nurses, and dentists in Northwestern Ohio with courses in heart and blood vessel diseases, stroke, and cancer via television. The courses were given during September, October, and November, three days each month at 7:30 a.m. and at 11 p.m. over television. They were broadcast by stations WGTE (channel 30) at Toledo, and WBGU (channel 70) at Bowling Green. Each broadcast lasted for 30 minutes.

The courses were concluded by "wrap-up" sessions for interested doctors at conveniently located hospitals.

#### Recorded On Tape

The courses had been recorded on video tape at the University of Washington (Seattle) school of medicine, and tried out originally on the Washington-Alaska Regional Medical Program.

They consisted of lecture-demonstrations by outstanding members of the Washington medical school faculty. Patients at the Harborview and Veterans Administration hospitals in Seattle also participated.

The television broadcasts in the northeastern Ohio area had been planned to reach 1,200 physicians. The hours for the broadcasts were selected as the time of day in which the doctors would be the least distracted by other activities, Dr. Madigan said.

#### Survey Made

After the end of the first broadcast Dr. Madigan sent between 700 and 800 questionnaires to the doctors for their reactions to the program. He received replies from Lucas, Wood, Fulton, Henry, Ottawa, Sandusky, and Defiance counties. Of the 14 doctors who responded, 77 per cent stated the quality of the program was "excellent or good."

The success of the program suggested to Dr. Madigan the video tapes to provide continuing medical education be produced locally in the Northwestern Ohio region and that the taxes be passed along from hospital to hospital where physicians could play them at their convenience.

Broadcasting the taped lectures was described by Dr. Madigan as simply a "pilot project" — part of a current nationwide effort to keep doctors informed regarding important new developments in the advancement of medical and surgical practice. Keeping them up to date is considered a major problem in current health care.