

A SYMPOSIUM ON THE PRESENT RESEARCH OF TOXOPLASMOSIS. LEIPZIG, OCTOBER 22ND AND 23RD 1970

The German Society for Protection against epidemic diseases in the G.D.R. and the protozoological section of the Parasitological Society in the G.D.R. organized—on the initiative of the well known German microbiologist Prof. G. Wildführ—a symposium on toxoplasmosis which was held at the institutes of the Medical Faculty of Charles Marx's University.

A number of European top scientists were invited to lecture at the symposium. Because of shortage of time some lectures were divided into two sections which fact was, in respect to such a narrowly specialized theme, a certain drawback for the participants. The first day was devoted to the pathology and clinics of the congenital and acquired toxoplasmosis. Professors Essbach from Magdeburg, Kabelitz from Bayrouth and Doctors Hengst from Berlin and Justus from Dresden gave lectures on this subject. Prof. Garin from Lyon presented a survey of the present state of the toxoplasmosis therapy. Prof. Desmonts (Paris) lectured on his experiences in the research of congenital toxoplasmosis. The afternoon section B was devoted to the pathogenesis and pathology of animal toxoplasmosis (Dr. Hilgenfeldt, Berlin, and Prof. Beverley, Sheffield). The evening panel discussion dealt with the problems of congenital toxoplasmosis. As it has lately been a rule, the question of the influence of chronic infection on pregnancy has—so far—remained without a definite and generally acknowledged solution. Prof. Desmonts and Dr. Siim quite univocally cling to the view that congenital toxoplasmosis can occur only in case of an acute infection during pregnancy and that all the other children of a mother who once had given birth to a child afflicted with toxoplasmosis, are healthy. According to their opinion preventive treatment is thus useless.

The next day was devoted to the ultrastructure of *Toxoplasma* (Doc. W. Wildführ, Leipzig), developmental cycle and virulence (Dr. Werner, West Berlin), penetration of parasites into cells (Dr. Lycke, Göteborg), cultivation in tissues (Dr. Csóka, Budapest). Prof. Bommer demon-

strated his film concerning the reproduction of toxoplasms in tissue cultures. The afternoon session of section A discussed the serodiagnostics of toxoplasmosis. Prof. Kramář (Prague) spoke about the relation of immunofluorescent reactions to other tests, Dr. Jíra (Prague) about curves indicating the course of antibodies, Dr. Müller (Dresden) about the indirect fluorescent reaction, and Dr. Samochowiec (Kato-witz) about cutaneous tests. Section B was given to epidemiology (Prof. Wildführ, Leipzig), present knowledge of transmission (Dr. Siim), problems of natural foci (Prof. Čatár, Bratislava), transmission by helminths (Doc. Engelbrecht, Kleinmachnow). The panel discussion, organized in the evening, dealt with the problems of epidemiology, epizootology and preventive measures against toxoplasmosis. Attention was paid to the questions of professional infection. An extreme measure, quite unique on a world-wide scale, has been taken in Czechoslovakia where all women up to the age of 40 are strictly forbidden to handle living strains of *Toxoplasma*. In England, according to the information by Prof. Beverley, only expectant mothers do not work at toxoplasmosis in laboratories. Dr. Siim allows even expectant mothers to be involved in work on toxoplasmosis in laboratories—in case they have already acquired antibodies—and all of them have so far given birth to healthy children.

The papers of the absent Soviet delegates (Prof. Zasukhin, Dr. Akinshina, Dr. Gracheva, Dr. Shevkunova, Dr. Jygiste) dealing with prophylaxis of congenital toxoplasmosis, structure and antigenic analysis of *Toxoplasma*, were read by Wildführ jun. Then Dr. Werner read the lecture of Prof. Piekarski on the fine structure of *Toxoplasma* cysts.

The symposium has again confirmed that many principal problems of toxoplasmosis remain open and require further research work. Recent discoveries of the developmental cycle of *Toxoplasma gondii* have brought a new insight into the matter.

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