

International symposium on leptospirosis at Smolenice

The international symposium on leptospirosis held at Smolenice from September 11 to 13, 1973, was sponsored by the Czechoslovak Medical Society J. E. Purkyně, the Czechoslovak Society for Microbiology and Epidemiology, the Czechoslovak Microbiological Society of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, and the Medical Faculty, of Comenius University, Bratislava. The symposium was attended by 57 specialists from 22 countries. The official opening and the welcoming addresses delivered by members of the organizing institutions were followed by two introductory papers presented by Dr. M. Abdussalam, WHO, Geneva, and Dr. J. W. Wolff, Holland. Both papers dealt with problems of international collaboration in the research of leptospirosis. The working programme of the symposium was divided into 5 sections on various aspects of leptospirosis, i.e., biology, taxonomy, diagnostics, epidemiology and the clinic. The 12 papers of Section 1 dealt with the ultrastructure of leptospires and other spirochetes, with the biological properties of haemolysins in *L. pomona*, with problems of leptospiral antigens and immunity, changes in the antigenic structure caused by culture on media containing leptospiral antibody, transformation of leptospires on experimental animals and the evaluation of bio-assay tests in the bacterine of *L. grippityphosa*. The 9 papers of Section 2 discussed problems concerned with the classification of leptospires in general and in association with DNA. Special attention was given to the taxonomy of the serogroup Pomona. Two new serotypes of Leptospirae isolated from small mammals, were recorded from Bulgaria. Other papers dealt with the results of electrophoresis of proteins in leptospires, with the taxonomy of water leptospires, with the possibility of a differentiation between pathogenic and saprophytic leptospires on the basis of

their period of survival in laboratory animals. The 6 papers of Section 3 discussed various diagnostic methods and their applicability in different types of diagnostic laboratories, i.e., the indirect haemagglutination test in the diagnosis of leptospirosis, experimental studies on the coincidence of bacteriological and serological findings in laboratory animals, susceptibility of leptospires to antibiotics in vitro, and problems of standardizing the serodiagnosis of leptospirosis. Section 4 with the largest number of papers (a total of 15) was concerned with the question of surveillance of leptospirosis, the ecology of pathogenic leptospires, comparative studies on natural foci of *L. grippityphosa* in Central Europe, reservoirs of Leptospirae in different countries, control measures and therapy of leptospirosis in livestock. The three papers of Section 5 dealt with clinical and professional aspects of leptospirosis. On September 14, 1973, a public meeting was held by the Subcommittee for Leptospiral Taxonomy.

The social programme received many favourable comments. At both evening parties, ample opportunities were offered for new personal contacts to be made, for informal discussion and exchange of information. Also the excursion to the castle Čierný Kameň arranged in the afternoon of September 12, 1973 was greatly enjoyed by all participants, and these events shared in the high success of the symposium. The symposium was extremely well organized and the Smolenice Castle offered a perfect background for both working sessions and social events. The papers delivered indicated, on an international scale, the most important current problems of leptospirology and the trends to be followed in the near future.

Dr. Z. Šebek, C.Sc.