

Second International Colloquium on Natural Foci of Infections in Central Europe

Between 25th and 28th February 1976 Second International Colloquium on Natural Foci of Infections in Central Europe was held in Graz, Austria. It was organized by the Institute of Hygiene, University of Graz, in cooperation with the Information Centre for the Protection of Environment of Styria. Dr. W. Sixl of the Institute of Hygiene was put in charge of its preparation and organization. The Colloquium was attended by scientists from 13 countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, USA, USSR, and Yugoslavia. Apart from

the attendance from Austria, the greatest number of participants came from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia and the Federal Republic of Germany.

After the salutary opening speech of Prof. Dr. Möse, Director of the Institute of Hygiene, Graz, the proceedings of the Colloquium were opened by four introductory papers. Prof. Dr. Jusatz (F.R.G.) assessed the importance of ecological aspects for the knowledge of natural foci of infections in Central Europe and presented a brief survey of the foci. Academician Rosický (ČSSR) stressed the importance of pasture land in anthropogenic regions from the aspect of

natural foci of infections and presented their typification from the phytocenological viewpoint. He also pointed out their epidemiological significance on the basis of ecology of vectors of common diseases with natural foci in Central Europe. Dr. Hoogstraal (USA) dealt with the role of migratory birds and ticks parasitizing on them in the transportation of various tick-borne arboviruses and demonstrated a rich material. The paper of Dr. Šebek (ČSSR) covered parasitic protozoans of small mammals with special regard to species pathogenic to man and discovered in various European countries.

The introductory papers were followed by a topical series dealing with natural focality of different groups of pathogenic agents and diseases caused by them: arboviruses, leptospires, listeriae, rickettsiae; tularemia, ornithosis and rabies. On final day papers with optional topics were presented.

The series of papers dealing with arboviruses was presented as first and as far as the number of contributions is concerned, it was the richest. During two sessions 20 papers were read. The Austrian participants primarily discussed the tick-borne encephalitis virus (TBE). Prof. Dr. Kunz devoted his introductory paper to vaccines and vaccination against TBE virus, this problem being very urgent in Austria at present. Of interest was the paper on climatic factors in the distribution of the TBE virus in southern Austria. Some papers were aimed at the clinical picture of the virus. Only one paper dealt with viruses transmitted by mosquitoes in Austria. Attention of participants from other countries was focused on viruses first isolated in Europe or quite new for science. Czechoslovak participants, the staff members of the Institute of Parasitology, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and of the Institute of Virology, Slovak Academy of Sciences, paid attention primarily to arboviruses transmitted by mosquitoes. They presented the results obtained in the studies of properties of the virus Lednice (Yaba 1) isolated in Czechoslovakia and in the studies of the natural focus of the virus Ťahyňa; they reported on the isolation of the viruses Sindbis and West Nile in Slovakia, which were for the first time detected in the Central Europe. Another previously known virus from non-European region, Semliki, was isolated in the German Democratic Republic and for the time being is called Semliki-like virus. The isolation of two new viruses from ticks *Ixodes ricinus* was reported by researchers of the University of Cologne. They were the virus Tettang, isolated in collaboration with the Institute of Parasitology, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, and the virus Eyach, related to the virus of Colorado tick fever, so far known from America only. Another paper was concerned with the isolation of the virus Bhunja from ticks *Haemaphysalis punctata* in Yugoslavia, after Italy the second finding of this virus in Europe. Two papers dealt with the

studies of arboviruses in Hungary and Poland.

The results presented in this section of the Colloquium summarized the contemporary state in the research of arboviruses and their potential medical importance. Remarkable was the fact that still more arboviruses are appearing in Europe, for the first time or as quite new for science.

The papers read in the topical series dealing with leptospires were less numerous. New aspects in the problems of environment were presented in papers devoted to the influence of man on the development of natural focus. (Prof. Dr. Chernenkha—USSR, Dr. Šebek and Prof. Dr. Rosický—ČSSR). Other papers discussed the occurrence of leptospirosis in Czechoslovakia, Austria and Bulgaria. The contributions which were concerned with listerioses were presented with a view to epidemiology and clinical picture, omitting the natural foci aspect.

The natural focality was stressed in the problems of tularemia. The introductory paper of Prof. Dr. Rosický and Dr. Šebek (ČSSR) pointed out this disease as a constant problem of public health and analyzed the mechanism by which a natural focus of tularemia is being maintained in Central Europe. Primarily the importance of elementary foci of this disease was pointed out. Attention to tularemia is also being paid in Hungary.

The next topic, rickettsioses, received a wide coverage. In total 10 papers were read. The introductory paper of Dr. Tarasevich et al. (USSR) presented an ecological view of the problem. Most remaining papers were concerned with Q-fever. Ornithosis was covered by 5 papers, of which 3 were read by Czechoslovak authors. The introductory paper on the problem of ornithosis in Czechoslovakia was presented by Dr. Šerý (ČSSR). Rabies was covered by only two papers.

The final day was allocated to papers with optional topics. They included results of complex serological investigations, some clinical work, toxoplasmosis etc. Then the discussion was directed at vectors. The relevant papers were mostly concerned with ticks, their occurrence, epidemiological importance, use of insecticides and ultrastructure. An interesting paper of Czechoslovak authors dealt with life cycle of the common tick. Their ecological approach, which is important mainly in the disclosure of natural focality of some diseases, was progressive.

The Colloquium was very profitable offering a good opportunity to researchers of natural focality to exchange experience and make their results public as this aspect mostly passes unnoticed at conferences devoted to relevant diseases and at which papers of clinical, therapeutic and other character predominate. The participants welcomed the proposal of the organizers that a subsequent similar Colloquium will be held in 1979.

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