

Outlook

Metal tubing may aid the regeneration of injured nerves . . . Oncologists recommend surgery to determine accurately the stage of lymphomas

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Pipeline Toward Nerve Regrowth

Porous stainless steel tubes are on trial as aids to nerve regeneration at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center. The aim is to provide a proper resting place for nerves while they heal. Initial studies, carried out by anatomy professor James L. Hall and colleagues, involve repair of rat sciatic nerves. Using a vacuum technique, the researchers draw the nerve ends into the best position for healing. They then wait for them to unite—about 100 days—before testing for function. The tube can be fitted according to the size of the nerve; in the rat studies it measures one half inch long and 1/40,000th inch in internal diameter. Dr. Hall believes the method should not only facilitate good nerve positioning but also overcome such major obstacles to regeneration as abnormal growth in the nerve stumps and fluid accumulation.

Huber

Surgical Staging Preferred

Cancer researchers at Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo, N.Y., call for pretreatment laparotomy to get an accurate picture of the neoplastic stage in cases of lymphoma or whenever intra-abdominal involvement is suspected. Dr. Elias G. Elias and his associates base this recommendation on studies of 56 lymphoma patients that showed "diagnostic methods are not reliable in detecting the extent of disease when the intra-abdominal organs are involved." Comparing clinical staging with surgical staging, they found that only 53% of the cases were correctly evaluated preoperatively. And clinical staging resulted in underestimation of the extent of disease in 30% of the cases.

Millions for Cigarette Studies

The major tobacco companies continue to finance research aimed at proving—or disproving—the effects of cigarettes on emphysema, chronic bronchitis, lung cancer, and cardiovascular diseases. Harvard Medical School is the receiver of a \$2.8-million grant, with Dr. Gary L. Huber, assistant professor of medicine, named as principal investigator. Comments Dr. Huber: "While it is common knowledge that cigarette smoking has been alleged to be a major cause of these diseases, many other factors, such as exposure to air pollutants and genetic differences in host susceptibility, may be important." Speaking on behalf of the donors, Alexander Galloway, chairman of the executive committee of the tobacco companies, calls Harvard the logical institution to carry out the research. The funding firms include American Brands, Liggett and Myers, Philip Morris, Lorillard, and the United States Tobacco Company, as well as the Tobacco Associates, an association of tobacco growers.

Getting More Cardiacs To Work

To put survivors of a first heart attack at ease when it comes time to go back to work, researchers at the University of California at Irvine have them wear portable transistors. The devices send ECG signals to the hospital where a computer monitors them for abnormalities. If any occur a bell rings, alerting a physician to get in touch with the patient. Drs. Alan Bures and Alfred Buerger, developers of the system, feel that it should help raise from 25% to 90% the number of cardiac patients who return to work.

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