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**GARDNERELLA VAGINALIS VAGINITIS IN Cu T 200 USERS**—P. Bhalla, N. Rewari and P. Chadha. *Ind. J. Med. Res.*, 1989, 89 : 80-86.

Vaginal samples obtained from intra-uterine contraceptive device (IUD — Cu T 200) users with and without vaginitis and from healthy non-users were studied for presence of *G. vaginalis* and cytological changes. Vaginitis was present in 29.5 percent and non-specific vaginitis in 28.3 percent of all IUD users, most of them being culture positive for *G. vaginalis*. *T. vaginalis* vaginitis was present in only 1.16 percent cases. Heavy colonisation with *G. vaginalis* was present in 17 of 25 IUD users with vaginitis and only in 1 of 25 healthy non-users ( $p < 0.001$ ). *G. Vavinalis* was recovered also from asymptomatic IUD users and from non-users, but heavy colonisation was very infrequent. The presence of 'clue cells' and many small Gram negative bacilli and scanty lactobacilli were associated with *G. vaginalis* recovery. Inflammation was reported on PAP smear more frequently among IUD users with or without vaginitis than among non-users ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**SERUM ALPHA-FETO PROTEIN IN AMOEBIC LIVER ABSCESS**—M. P. Sharma, M. Irshad and N. Verma. *Ind. J. Med. Res.*, 1989, 90 : 127-130.

Alpha-feto protein (AFP) is an onco-fetal protein that appears in patients with malignant neoplasms like hepatocellular carcinoma or germ cell tumours of the gonads. Recently, it has been demonstrated that AFP level is also raised during invasive amoebiasis, particularly in

amoebic liver abscess (ALA). Serum alpha-feto protein (AFP) levels were determined using a sensitive and specific ELISA technique in healthy persons (40), patients with amoebic liver abscess (ALA, 70) and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC, 20). The AFP levels in normal persons ALA patients had AFP levels in the normal range; only a small proportion (14.3%) showed elevated levels (ange 20-75 ng/ml). Sera from HCC patients had significantly high AFP values in the range of 25 to 340 ng/ml as compared to normal controls and ALA patients. An analysis of serial samples from 10 ALA patients in convalescent phase showed no difference in AFP level during acute and convalescent phase of infection.

**EFFECT OF CAPSAICIN ON TRIGLYCERIDE ACCUMULATION AND SECRETION IN ETHANOL FED RATS**—K. Sambaiah and M. N. Satyanarayana *Ind. J. Med. Res.*, 1989, 90 : 154-158.

The mechanism by which 'Capsaicin' (trans-8-methyl-N-Vanillyl-6-nonenamide), the pungent principle of the common spice 'red pepper' counters the liver triglyceride accumulation in rats after a single dose administration of ethanol was investigated. Rats fed capsaicin (0.15, 1.5 and 15 mg %) containing diets were able to counter by about 30 per cent of hepatic lipid accumulation caused by a single dose administration of ethapol (6 g/kg body weight). The rate of triglyceride secretion in capsaicin fed animals from liver to plasma was also elevated as judged by Triton WR-1332 induced hypertriglyceridemia. The results suggest a possible mechanism by which capsaicin counters ethanol induced hepatic lipid accumulation in ip rats.

✓ **A SIMPLE SPOT-TEST FOR CIRCULATING ENTAMOEBA HISTOLYTICA AN-**

TIGEN-ANTIBODY COMPLEXES IN PATIENTS WITH AMOEBIC LIVER ABSCESS—B. M. Gandhi, M. Irshad, S. K. Acharya and B.N.Tondon. *Ind.J. Med.Res.*, 1989, 89 : 177-183.

Detection of circulating amoebic antigen is a definite proof of ongoing invasive amoebiasis. Recently described techniques have required prior precipitation of circulating immune complexes (CIC's) and takes about two days to complete the test. We describe a rapid and simple enzyme linked immuno sorbent assay (ELISA) for the detection of *E. histolytica* immune complexes in serum. Anti-amoebic antibody purified by affinity chromatography was used both to precoat strips of nitrocellulose membrane and as an enzyme carrier. These strips were incubated with samples of concentrated test serum using a manifold followed by the enzyme conjugate. Following treatment with a peroxidase substrate 3 amino-9-ethylcarbazole the presence of *E. histolytica* antigens was visualized as red spots. Blocking of

positive test sera with excess antibodies inhibited this reaction. Thirty-five of 47 (75%) serum samples from patients with amoebic liver abscess showed positive ELISA results. In addition, 5 of 43 (11.6%) serum samples from control subjects with other enteric diseases like viral hepatitis (16), *Gardia lamblia* infection (18) and intestinal tuberculosis (9) also had positive test results. However, all the 35 normal healthy controls were negative. The advantage of spot test over equally sensitive conventional ELISA techniques are: (a) the use of nitrocellulose membrane permits the reaction to be viewed against white back ground; (b) There is no necessity to remove CIC's the test is quicker, less than an hour; (c) using manifold, the antigen sample becomes concentrated, thus facilitates the detection of small amounts of CIC's and increase the sensitivity; (d) the spot test is significantly cheaper as the reagents can be used repeatedly. The test is recommended as an aid to the diagnosis in cases suspected of ALA.

### MINOXIDIL : HOPE FOR THE BALD ?

Reports in medical journals of encouraging results in the treatment of male baldness with minoxidil have aroused great media enthusiasm for this new "drug to make hair grow". The manufacturer, Upjohn, has marketed a topical preparation containing 2% minoxidil ('Regaine', 'Rogaine') for the treatment of male baldness (androgenic alopecia) in

Belgium, Canada and France and is about to do so in many other countries. Minoxidil can certainly induce growth of terminal hair in men with androgenic alopecia, but how much and how useful this is remains uncertain. Data on its efficacy in alopecia areata still seem too scanty to justify detailed review. *The Lancet* 1987; I : 1019-1022.