The Association of Clinical Pathologists: 81st general meeting

The 81st general meeting of the Association of Clinical Pathologists was held at Imperial College, London, on 26, 27, and 28 September 1968. A symposium on 'Alcohol' included papers on 'Breath alcohol analysis', 'Chemical determination of alcohol', 'Bacterial production of alcohol', 'Fallacies in the interpretation of blood alcohol values', and 'Medico-legal aspects'. A second symposium contained papers on 'Infections in the newborn', and the symposium held jointly with the Association of Clinical Biochemists was on 'Factors influencing the normal range in the clinical laboratory'. The popular buzz groups provided opportunities for informal discussions by small groups on a variety of topics and there was a slide seminar on 'Soft tissue lesions'. The Presidential Address, by M. G. Nelson, was on 'Automation in the laboratory'. Abstracts of some of the other papers follow.

THE INFLUENCE OF ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES ON THE PRESENCE AND PERSISTENCE OF *Candida albicans* AND β -HAEMOLYTIC STREPTOCOCCI IN THE VAGINA

C. A. MORRIS (Bristol) Preliminary observations on the vaginal flora of 291 women attending a family planning clinic are recorded in the Journal (*J. clin. Path.*, 1967, 20, 636).

Further studies have been made on this same population and samples collected by domiciliary visits at intervals of one and two years, the results being analysed statistically.

Patients with asymptomatic candidiasis on one occasion were significantly more likely to have *Candida albicans* again when sampled a year later than were women with no yeasts on the first occasion. This principle applied also to the carriage of β -haemolytic streptococci of Lancefield's groups B and D.

There was no significant difference in the incidence of *C. albicans* in preliminary and final samples collected. The persistence and new infection rate with *C. albicans* was not significantly higher in patients taking oral contraceptives than in other women, even following prolonged use of these hormones. The highest incidence, not quite significant, occurred in a small population taking a lynoestrenol/mestranol preparation, indicating that products of predominant oestrogenic activity may contribute to the establishment of vaginal candidiasis.

There was a significant association of *C. albicans* with β -haemolytic streptococci groups B and D.

It is suggested that common environmental factors favour the carriage of *C. albicans* and β -haemolytic streptococci in the vagina and this is probably largely independent of methods of contraception. These species may persist in the vagina for many months without the patient developing symptoms and signs of infection.

A NEW APPROACH TO THE INVESTIGATION OF SCALP RINGWORM IN LONDON SCHOOLCHILDREN

YVONNE M. CLAYTON AND GILLIAN MIDGLEY (London) During the past two years studies were carried out by

the Department of Medical Mycology of St. John's Hospital for Diseases of the Skin on the incidence of scalp ringworm in children attending primary day schools in five London boroughs. The investigations were undertaken with the cooperation of the local health departments either as a result of following up cases referred to the department or after direct requests from the school health authorities.

The scalps of all the children in each school were examined for hair loss, for fluorescence under a Wood's lamp, and samples from each child were taken for culture studies using 3 in. plastic massage brushes. A brush was passed through the hair six times and then replaced in a numbered polythene bag. On return to the laboratory, cultures were made by pressing each brush into the surface of Sabouraud's dextrose agar medium contained in standard size petri dishes. Children with clinical signs of infection produced fungal colonies from every point of the brush. Cultures from carriers showed only 1 to 10 colonies. In classes where cases of scalp ringworm were present, scalp carriage rates of between 12% and 30% were found whereas in other classes in the same school the carriage rate recorded was between 1% and 5%.

Twenty-one schools were visited and over 10,000 children were investigated using this brush-sampling technique. The species responsible for scalp ringworm in the various schools were *Microsporum audouinii*, *M. audouinii* var. *rivalierii*, *M. canis*, *M. ferrugineum*, *Trichophyton sulphureum*, *T. violaceum*, and *T. soudanense*.

A NEW MEDIUM FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF SALMONELLA OUTBREAKS

D. SHANSON (Westminster Hospital, London, introduced by B. W. LACEY) A new medium containing magnesium chloride (4.3 g%), novobiocin (6.8 mg%), and cobalt sulphate (11.8 mg%) in MacConkey base has been found highly selective for *S. paratyphi B* and all the common salmonellae responsible for food poisoning in Britain. *S. paratyphi B* and all 34 food poisoning salmonellae tested, including *typhimurium*, *enteritidis*, *panama*,