

NEWS RELEASE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL SCHOOL AT DALLAS



FRANK CHAPPELL Director of Medical Information

BOB FENLEY Science News Editor

DALLAS -- Continuation of important studies in diarrheal diseases has been assured at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School at Dallas through a grant of \$172,434 from The John A. Hartford Foundation, Inc., of New York City.

The diarrheal disease study unit at Southwestern was created three years ago by an earlier Hartford Foundation grant of \$122,011. The new grant, extending the work for another three years, was announced jointly today by the Foundation's president, Ralph W. Burger, and Dr. Charles C. Sprague, dean of the medical school.

The investigators are Dr. John D. Nelson, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, and Dr. Kenneth C. Haltalin, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics.

Drs. Nelson and Haltalin have conducted studies into various types of diarrheal diseases, especially shigellosis. They are currently studying the effects of malnutrition on susceptibility to diarrheal diseases. They have authored 12 major papers on their studies that have appeared in scientific journals.

-more-

first add grant

Diarrheal diseases and particularly shigellosis are important causes of death in much of the southern and western United States, and are the principal cause of death among children in many parts of the world. Recently diarrheal disease has been recognized as a major preventable cause of mental retardation and central nervous system problems in this country.

A possible result of the studies would be to determine that supplementation of the diet by one or two single food elements might serve to help protect a child against shigellosis and perhaps other types of diarrheal disease as effectively as any vaccine.

In studies in guinea pigs, the Dallas investigators have determined that a lack of the vitamin folic acid in the diet makes the animals susceptible to fatal infection, while healthy animals on a full diet are resistant. Folic acid is found in green, leafy vegetables and in certain other plant and animal tissues.

Further studies are under way to determine other types of nutritional deficiencies that contribute to diarrheal disease.

January 6, 1969

##