

NEWS RELEASE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL SCHOOL AT DALLAS



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DALLAS -- Studies delving into a serious health problem that sometimes appears in newborn infants -- hyaline membrane disease -- are under way at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School at Dallas under a grant from the Medical Research Foundation of Texas.

Under the direction of Dr. E. Warner Ahlgren, assistant professor of anesthesiology, the studies seek to define what is happening in the lungs of the newborn when hyaline membrane disease appears, usually a few hours following birth.

Studies in experimental animals seek to recreate the situation found in the afflicted babies, Dr. Ahlgren said.

There probably are 200 cases of hyaline membrane disease a year in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, Dr. Ahlgren said. Untreated, the mortality rate is about 80 per cent, but with prompt diagnosis and treatment this rate can be lowered to 20 per cent, he said.

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Initial work on the studies was begun two years ago under a federal grant, was continued for a time under funds supplied by the Dallas Heart Association, and had been suspended recently pending receipt of new funds. The recent grant from the Medical Research Foundation of Texas to Southwestern has permitted a resumption of the investigations.

For some years the Medical Research Foundation of Texas, a Houston-based organization supported in part by the Dallas United Fund and by about 60 other united funds in Texas, has channeled research monies into the medical and dental colleges of Texas.

With new grants announced this year, the total has now passed the \$600,000 mark, included more than \$126,000 to Southwestern. This year's grant to Southwestern was \$6,000. The funds are presented as unrestricted research grants to each institution, and a committee within the school then allocates the money for specific projects. Dr. Ahlgren has been provided with \$8,000 to continue his studies in hyaline membrane disease.

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