

# NEWS

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS  
(SOUTHWESTERN)  
MEDICAL SCHOOL AT DALLAS



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Dallas scientist Dr. S. Edward Sulkin has been named consultant on laboratory safety to the National Safety Council, it was announced today.

In his post Dr. Sulkin will advise the council's Research and Development Section on means of safeguarding medical researchers against the hazards inherent in handling virulent disease-producing materials in the course of their scientific study.

Dr. Sulkin, professor and chairman of microbiology at The University of Texas (Southwestern) Medical School at Dallas, has been described as the nation's foremost authority on laboratory-acquired infections. He is the author with a UTSMS associate, Dr. Robert Pike, of the first comprehensive survey of this problem, which is faced daily by tens of thousands of laboratory workers who study exotic and often deadly viruses and bacteria.

The survey, begun in 1949 with queries to 5,000 laboratories and updated regularly since, has recorded so far 3,255 known cases of "overt laboratory-acquired infection" in the world, resulting in 132 deaths.

More than half the cases and 95 of the deaths have resulted from bacteria and viruses, the rest from other agents, Dr. Sulkin reports.

Dangers encountered in disease research were pointed up by an incident last February, in which three persons, including a Yale University laboratory technician, died after being infected by Lassa Fever, a lethal virus discovered in Nigeria.

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Dr. Sulkin received the safety council appointment upon recommendation of Dr. E.M. Foster, president of the American Society for Microbiology. Dr. Sulkin recently was elected to the Governing Council of the society, an organization of nearly 15,000 scientists.

Laboratory exposure dangers are not merely an abstract concern of Dr. Sulkin and his associates at the Dallas medical school. A noted virologist, he regularly works with infectious materials in his own research into two deadly viral diseases--rabies and Japanese encephalitis. His widely recognized studies of rabies have been under way for 25 years.

Of the risks involved, Dr. Sulkin says:

"Anybody who works with these agents must have a healthy respect for them or he will run into problems. Otherwise, there is no reason for real concern if we build an environment that is safe."

"We don't want to be martyrs," he says, "but how are you going to know about diseases if you don't work with the things that cause them?"

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