

NEWS

*from the genetic world**

* **Service de génétique humaine et étude de jumeaux à l'O.M.S.** L'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé, en raison de la place croissante qu'occupent les études de génétique dans les sciences médicales, vient de créer un Service de Génétique Humaine à son Siège de Genève en vue de coordonner et de stimuler les recherches et de développer l'enseignement. Le chef de ce nouveau service est le Dr R. L. Kirk, ancien Maître de Conférences de génétique humaine à l'Université d'Australie occidentale où ses travaux personnels étaient principalement consacrés à l'étude des isolats dans le sud et le sud-est de l'Asie, en Australie et dans l'ouest du Pacifique. Le service qu'il dirige maintenant à Genève s'occupe des questions suivantes: enquêtes sur des populations présentant un intérêt génétique exceptionnel, étude de diverses affections héréditaires telles que les hémoglobinopathies, facilitation du travail des chercheurs (par exemple constitution de centres de référence internationaux pour les marqueurs génétiques), amélioration et normalisation des méthodes employées dans les études de génétique. On espère consacrer une plus grande attention aux recherches sur la distribution des hémoglobinopathies (notamment la thalassémie et la déficience en G6PD) et sur leur importance en santé publique. L'O.M.S. cherchera aussi à stimuler l'intérêt pour les nouvelles méthodes de traitement dans les cas de drépanocytose et de thalassémie à l'état homozygote.

Une évaluation est en cours sur l'emploi des jumeaux pour les recherches épidémiologiques et génétiques; il est possible qu'à l'avenir l'Organisation serve de centre de rassemblement et de diffusion des renseignements sur les études de jumeaux. On espère aussi que l'Organisation contribuera de façon importante à coordonner les études de génétique des populations, spécialement en ce qui concerne les populations ayant une économie de cueillette ou une économie agricole simple ou encore celles qui vivent à l'état d'isolats au milieu de collectivités plus avancées.

D'autres activités sont envisagées. Elles porteront sur le rôle des facteurs génétiques dans les troubles mentaux, la normalisation des techniques d'étude des aberrations chromosomiques associées aux avortements spontanés, l'étude de la génétique des cellules somatiques et les conséquences génétiques de l'exposition à des produits chimiques nouveaux dans le milieu humain.

* **L'Institut de Génétique Médicale de l'Université de Genève.** Le 1^{er} Juillet 1966 va être inauguré, à Genève, le nouvel Institut de Génétique Médicale de l'Université, dirigé par le Prof. David Klein. L'inauguration coïncide avec la Réunion des Secrétaires de l'Association Mondiale des Groupes de Travail de Neurologie de la Fédération Mondiale de Neurologie, dont le Prof. Klein est le Secrétaire Général.

* Requests for the release of news concerning Genetics and related sciences, and, more generally, Medicine and Biology, shall be favorably considered.

Bien des Autorité vont participer à la cérémonie, ainsi qu'aux Réunions scientifiques, telles que le Prof. Franceschetti, de l'Université de Genève; le Prof. Frauchiger, de l'Université de Berne; le Prof. Gedda de l'Université de Rome, et beaucoup d'autres.

* **Les Jumeaux sur "La Vie Médicale"**. Un numéro spécial de "La Vie Médicale" a été préparé (Mai, 1966), dédié au sujet des jumeaux. De nombreux spécialistes y ont collaboré sur les sujets suivants:

- M. Lamy (Paris): Editorial – Les Jumeaux.
- L. Gedda (Rome): Vision Panoramique de l'Etude Scientifique des Jumeaux.
- A. Giroud (Paris): Les Mécanismes de la Gémellité.
- R. Toulouse (Rennes): Le Diagnostic de la Grossesse Multiple avant l'Accouchement.
- H. Pigeaud (Lyon): Principaux Problèmes Obstétricaux de la Gémellarité.
- J. Belaisch (Paris): Provocation des Grossesses Gémellaires.
- P. Vigne (Paris): Les Jumeaux Multiples.
- H. Bastide (Paris): Quelques Données Statistiques sur les Naissances Gémellaires.
- M. Klein (Paris): Les Greffes chez les Jumeaux.
- P. Vallery-Radot (Paris): Les Jumeaux Célèbres.

* **Nipogemellologia**. Minerva Nipiologica — rivista bimestrale del gruppo Minerva Medica — ha pubblicato un numero particolarmente dedicato ai gemelli. Esso contiene gli Atti del XII Congresso della Società Italiana di Nipiologia, svoltasi dal 7 al 9 Giugno 1965, a Torino, nell'ambito delle Riunioni Medico Chirurgiche Internazionali, sul tema della Nipogemellologia. Presieduto dal Prof. E. Egidi, il Congresso è stato introdotto da una Relazione del Prof. Mussa sul tema «I gemelli nella leggenda, nell'arte e nella storia», e da una Conferenza del Prof. L. Gedda sul tema «Orizzonti attuali della gemellologia», cui han fatto seguito numerose altre relazioni e comunicazioni. (*Minerva Nipiologica*, Ottobre 1965).

* **Twins in the Pre-Columbian Medical Sculpture**. The Stockholm Museum of National Antiquities is presenting the outstanding Weisman Collection of Pre-Columbian Medical Sculpture, collected by Dr. Abner I. Weisman (New York), and for the first time exhibited outside the United States, in relation with the International Congress of Fertility and Sterility.

Twins are also presented, and, according to the available records, they appear to have not always been considered a happy event. Were they a sign of marital infidelity? Or were they a superabundant gift from the gods? In Pre-Peruvian societies one twin was killed at birth and placed in a special jar for preservation. Not so, however, with the tribes in Western Mexico, where there are evidences of identical twins up to young adulthood. (Lakekonst i lera. Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm 1966).

* **International Symposium on Genetics**. During the last week of July, 1966, an International Symposium on Genetics will be held at São Paulo, Brazil, approved by the IUBS during the last International Congress of Genetics. The subjects to be discussed are: "The Dynamic of Population and Evolution"; "Quantitative Genetics" and "Breeding". A definite program was not yet organized. This Symposium is sponsored by the Brazilian

Society of Genetics and the Organizing Committee is composed by: F. G. Brieger, *Executive Secretary*; A. Blumenschein, J. T. A. Gurgel, E. Paterniani, R. Vencovsky, Luiz Edmundo Magalhaes, Antonio José Teixeira Mendes, Antonio Buschinelli and Ademar Freire-Maia, *Members*; W. E. Kerr and Newton Freire-Maia, *Members "ad hoc"*. Prof. Brieger will be in Germany until next September, and Dr. A. Blumenschein will act as Executive Secretary during his absence.

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* ***Changes at the Blood Group Reference Laboratory.*** On September 1st, 1965, Dr. K. L. G. Goldsmith, the present Deputy Director, has succeeded Dr. A. E. Mourant as Director of the Blood Group Reference Laboratory. The Laboratory will continue to deal with all aspects of blood group work with the exception of anthropological surveys, which will remain the responsibility of the outgoing Director. On the same date Dr. Mourant has become a member of the Medical Research Council's External Scientific Staff, and Director of the new Serological Population Genetics Laboratory, associated with St. Bartholomew's Hospital. The Laboratory is situated at Boundary House, Charterhouse Street, London, E. C. 1., which will be the address for personal visitors and for specimens delivered by hand during working hours. The postal address, and delivery address for all other specimens, is "c/o St. Bartholomew's Hospital, West Smithfield, London, E. C. 1.". Professor W. G. Spector, Professor of Pathology, has kindly arranged for the refrigeration of specimens delivered at the Hospital when the Laboratory is closed. The Serological Population Genetics Laboratory will incorporate the existing Anthropological Blood Group Centre, but the latter will for the present remain at the Royal Anthropological Institute, 21 Bedford Square, London, W. C. 1. Authors of papers are reminded that in future both laboratories will be grateful for reprints of papers on blood groups in general. In addition the Blood Group Reference Laboratory would like to continue building up its series of papers on the clinical and immunological aspects of the subject, while the Serological Population Genetics Laboratory needs all papers which contain the results of surveys, however small, of the incidence of blood groups, serum factors and other genetical factors in populations everywhere, not excluding that of Britain. It would be most helpful if papers containing survey data, and especially those with a large amount of data, could be sent in duplicate.

* ***The Ruggles Gates chair in biology.*** The Mount Allison University has recently announced the establishment of a new Chair in Biology. This has been entitled to late Dr. Reginald Ruggles Gates, F.R.S., who had made arrangements, since many years, to endow the Dept. of Biology of his University. A Gates Memorial Collection has also been inaugurated.

* ***Many International guests expected at 115th Annual AMA Convention.*** Chicago. A number of physicians from outside the United States are expected to attend the American Medical Association's 115th Annual Convention in Chicago, June 26-30, 1961.

Although the meeting is North American's largest medical forum, its outlook is

worldwide. A special program, for example, will be devoted to discussions of population expansion throughout the world; another program will be made up of papers on disease in Southeast Asia.

“Medicine in the United States has a large and growing role in international health”, states F. J. L. Blasingame, M. D., executive vice-president of the AMA. “The AMA is always ready to help extend, through friendship and cooperation, the benefits of medicine to all the world’s peoples”.

A hospitality program is being planned by the AMA Department of International Health and Council on Postgraduate Programs for physicians from other countries who visit the Chicago meeting. The program includes tours of hospital and research facilities in the Chicago area.

The scientific program of the Annual Convention will include presentation of more than 500 scientific papers, medical motion pictures, color television programs on medical subjects, discussion and seminar sessions, and more than 300 scientific exhibits.