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Foreword

AS GUEST editor of this number of *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* I have selected several communications representative of the diversity of nutritional interests in this medical school and of its association with other workers in the field of nutrition. These papers illustrate but a small portion of the subject areas which might have been included. It is hoped that they will provide the reader with an impression of the scope of nutrition interests which can exist within a medical center and, at the same time, indicate the numerous opportunities and responsibilities for education in nutrition afforded by a staff conscious of the subject of nutrition as it relates to different medical specialties.

Some years ago we discussed nutrition in the medical school curriculum¹ and nutrition surveys in relation to professional training in schools of medicine and public health.² The present journal illustrates the thesis there expressed, that nutrition permeates all facets of medicine, both clinical and basic medical sciences. (Indeed, no less an authority than Hippocrates stated that "... the art of Medicine would not have been invented at first, nor would it have been made a subject of investigation (for there would be no need of it), if when men were indisposed, the same food and other articles of regimen which they eat and drink when in good health were proper for them, and if no others were preferable to these . . .") It further illustrates the remarkable exchange of ideas among professional workers from many fields when they are jointly engaged in a nutrition survey.

The teaching and learning opportunities afforded by nutrition surveys have been notably

recognized and exploited by eleven studies completed to date by the Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense. The results of one such survey in the Republic of the Philippines are included in this collection. The valuable and inevitable interinstitutional and international associations and exchanges which occur through these experiences are illustrated by this report and its accompanying paper by two members of the faculty of the University of the Philippines. This report is in the present number because several members of the staff of Vanderbilt University participated in the survey. Indeed, the pertinence of inclusion of this paper in a Vanderbilt University number is enhanced by the fact that Dr. Manuel Macapinlac has, since engaging in this work, completed a period of graduate study in nutritional biochemistry at this university.

It may be of interest to relate the background of the Division of Nutrition of the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine as an example of a permanent nutrition unit within a medical school. Prior to 1939 several members of different departments of this medical school were engaged in research related to nutrition. During 1939 to 1941 interest in nutrition became somewhat more focused through the conduct of a series of nutrition surveys within the general population. These pioneering surveys were made under the direction of Dr. John B. Youmans and were cooperative undertakings of the Departments of Medicine and of Biochemistry. From 1943 to 1947 these studies* of nutri-

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tion of populations were sponsored cooperatively by the Tennessee Department of Public Health and Vanderbilt University and were initially directed by Dr. William D. Robinson (who is now Professor and Head of the Department of Medicine, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor). Subsequently, they were directed by me. In 1945 five departments (Preventive Medicine and Public Health, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Medicine and Biochemistry) of this medical school combined resources in an intensive nutrition investigation of women attending the Vanderbilt University Hospital Prenatal Clinic and of infants born to these mothers. This study, known as the Vanderbilt Cooperative Study of Maternal and Infant Nutrition, led to a long and close interdepartmental emphasis on nutrition. In 1947 the desirability of having a continuing unit in the school to represent the sphere of nutrition was recognized through the establishment of the Division of Nutrition. To this division was designated a responsibility for assuring continuous research and teaching stimulus and facilities for the subject area of nutrition.

In the late 1930's a one-quarter course in nutrition had been instituted in the medical curriculum. Initially, this course was offered jointly by the Departments of Biochemistry and of Medicine. At present a course in the Fundamentals of Human Nutrition is the responsibility of the Division of Nutrition and instruction is provided by members of the staff of that division in conjunction with the staff of the Departments of Biochemistry, Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, and by visiting lecturers. This course is given during the last quarter of the second year of the medical school curriculum. It gives the student an understanding of the physiology and biochemistry of nutrition and relates the subject of nutrition to disease states. Subject matter peculiarly that of medical specialties is not presented in this course but is covered by the appropriate specialties. For example, the subject of infant feeding *per se* is taught by the staff of the Department of Pediatrics and not presented in this course on nutrition. However, in the course on nutrition the medical student is provided with sufficient background

to understand and appraise the requirements and adequacy of infant feeding. Likewise he is introduced to the principles of therapeutic dietetics, but therapeutic dietetics as such is a subject which the student encounters later in his experience in the medical, surgical and other clinics and through association with the members of the Department of Dietetics.

The Division of Nutrition maintains an independent investigative program as well as a varying number of cooperative research undertakings with staff members, fellows and students in other departments of the medical school. It does not attempt to encompass all the work in nutrition which is carried out within the medical school. Instead, its function in this regard is to assure a continuing and active interest and program of research in nutrition throughout the institution.

Among the associated groups in the Vanderbilt University Medical Center is the Department of Dietetics. In our cooperation with this department we have become aware that many of the functions, services and resources of departments of dietetics in medical centers are often not recognized or used to their fullest in the varied programs—educational, medical, research and community—of medical centers. Accordingly, I have asked Miss Bernice Hopkins, Director, Department of Dietetics, Vanderbilt University Hospital, to prepare a description of the activities of that department as an example of the role which departments of dietetics play in the modern university medical center. This is published in the accompanying article.

WILLIAM J. DARBY, M.D., PH.D.
Vanderbilt University
School of Medicine
Nashville, Tennessee

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