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Pediatric TEACHING CLINIC Aids Migrant Farm Workers



MOTHER takes her child to the pediatric clinic operating afternoons twice weekly at the King Ferry camp for migrant agricultural workers in upstate New York.



CLINIC DIRECTOR Dr. William H. Bergstrom (left) discusses a young patient with senior medical student Martin Braker, who profits from contact with realities of camp.

Special to Pediatric Herald

KING FERRY, N.Y.—Pediatric clinics for children of migrant workers—staffed by medical centers—can not only provide valuable experience for medical students, but may lift what can be an onerous burden for private practitioners in areas around the camps.

The validity of this contention is being demonstrated in a unique clinic for children of agricultural workers operated in this lakeside village under the auspices of the Upstate Medical Center in nearby Syracuse.

Now completing its third summer, the pediatric clinic in this camp, which houses up to 1,400 migrants, is operated in cooperation with Dr. LaVerne Campbell, Cayuga County health commissioner.

Unique Project

Routine physical examinations, immunizations, and diagnosis and treatment on an outpatient basis are provided by Dr. William H. Bergstrom, professor of pediatrics at the Upstate Medical Center, working with medical students chosen for a summer's fellowship.

So far as Dr. Bergstrom knows, this venture is the only pediatric clinic for migrants' children offered under the auspices of any medical center.

Working under this unique preceptorship, medical students not only learn clinical techniques in a practical setting, but are called on for considerable ingenuity in the primitive setting of the camp.

Examining a baby stretched out on an 18-inch-high table taken from the center's nursery is not quite like a routine exam on a modern examining table.

Improvising Necessary

Gadgets for weighing and measuring must be improvised, as well as those for other tasks in which equipment can't be brought along in the little black bag.

The experience is particularly valuable for the prospective pediatrician, Dr. Bergstrom believes, because each day's work vividly illustrates the importance of socioeconomic factors in disease.



STUDENTS of the New York State University Upstate Medical Center at Syracuse learn clinical techniques in a practical setting from Dr. Bergstrom (right), professor of pediatrics at the center. At left is Robert Snowe, senior medical student and a junior intern in the New York State Health Department program. Experience in managing minor complaints, in evaluating well children and in gathering accurate data is gained at the clinic.

DAY-CARE CENTER for migrants' children is used for pediatric clinic. Mrs. Ralph Grover, nurse, examines a boy's injured toe.

It quickly becomes obvious to the student that he can't do much without parental cooperation, and to obtain this he must be very clear and simple in his instructions.

Most of the illness he sees is not complicated, but it requires particularly careful management because of the patients' isolation.

Taking histories and doing physicals assumes new importance in a setting where laboratory facilities are not available.

And in an era when the clinical material once provided by welfare patients is decreasing due to third-party payment and more general prosperity, the teaching material provided in such a camp is invaluable.

Students chosen for the fellowship have just completed their third year at the Upstate Medical Center under the auspices of the State University of New York.

Professional relationships with practitioners in the area have been carefully maintained through appropriate health officers and medical societies.

It is Dr. Bergstrom's impression that men practicing in the area have welcomed the clinic, since patients either would not be seen or might represent something of a burden to the local men.

"The assumption of such a service by full-time people on medical center staffs during the academic lull in the summertime would seem to provide a desirable solution to the problem," Dr. Bergstrom said.

Diseases seen include diarrhea, impetigo, upper respiratory and parasitic infections, anemia and an occasional pneumonitis, together with some orthopedic problems which are referred to regional clinics or hospitals.

TB Incidence Low

Contrary to expectations, the incidence of tuberculosis has been extremely low. Tuberculin tests given 400 children last summer produced only one inactive and one questionably active case.

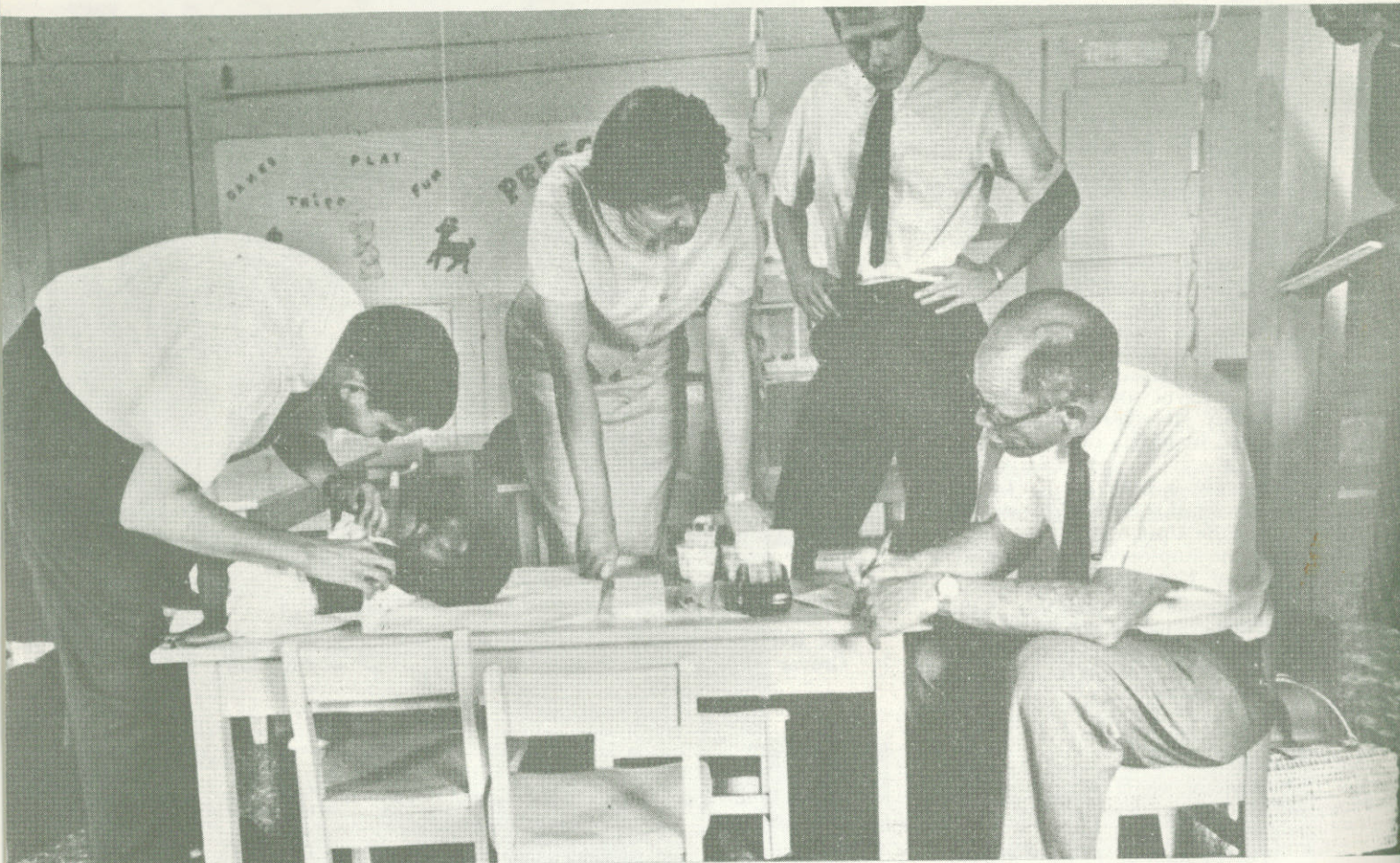
Malnutrition, contrary to another preliminary impression, does not appear to be a particular problem. At least the children examined meet the generally accepted norms for height and weight.



IN ROUTINE physical examination, child is held by Mrs. Grover while a health volunteer worker reads weighing scale.



PROSPECTIVE PEDIATRICIANS near end of afternoon outpatient clinic. The students chosen for the medical center fellowship receive a \$600 stipend for 10 weeks' work.



A major problem is the low level of health education among parents, who do not realize the significance of diarrhea or impetigo and are oblivious to the dangers of unrefrigerated formulas or flies in the cradle. These problems require joint action by camp management, health officials, and clinical personnel.

Past medical records from other centers are difficult to obtain or nonexistent, though Dr. Bergstrom pointed out that the migrants from Florida have had access to excel-

lent migrant-care health facilities.

Initiated in the summer of 1961 by Dr. Bergstrom and Dr. William Hafner, district health officer for the state health department, the clinic service has been expanded to another center at Sodus, N.Y.

Public health nurses to staff these clinics, vaccines, tuberculin-testing material and some medications are provided by the N.Y. State Health Department, and records are kept on department forms.

During the entire season last year from July through October the clinics saw a total of 518 children, treated 158 illnesses and provided 625 immunizations.

It is probable that without these clinics these children might have gone largely untreated and unprotected against disease, said Dr. Bergstrom, predicting that this new kind of clinic may help provide an answer to one of the more pressing health problems of rural society.