

1917

WASSERMAN LABORATORY.

ORGANIZATION.

There have been a number of changes in the personnel of the laboratory during the past twelve months. At the beginning of the present fiscal year there were six employees including the assistant director. With the assumption of certain new tests and with an increase in the number of the routine tests, two additional employees were necessary. By making certain changes in organization it has been found possible to carry on the additional work with the same number of employees as used last year.

The following description is given of the various activities of the Wassermann Laboratory:

(1) WASSERMAN TEST.

A comparison of the Wassermann tests made during the past three years shows a gradual increase, the most noteworthy increase being in the number of specimens submitted by practicing physicians.

TABLE I.

INSTITUTIONS AND PHYSICIANS SERVED AND THE NUMBER
OF SPECIMENS FROM THESE SOURCES.

Number of Institutions and Physicians served.				Number of Specimens.		
	1914-15 (6 mos.)	1915-16 (12 mos.)	1916-17 (12 mos.)	1914-15 (6 mos.)	1915-16 (12 mos.)	1916-17 (12 mos.)
State Institutions	15	21	24	6,350	11,305	
Municipal & Private Institutions	27	53	65		7,325	
Physicians	110	314		142	2,396	
Total				6,492	24,406	

*Final figures will be added Dec. 1.

25,497

It will be noted in Table I that over two hundred physicians who had never before availed themselves of Wassermann service in this laboratory are now making use of this valuable test - representing an increase of 1374 specimens. Although this increase is relatively small as compared with the number of specimens submitted by the various institutions, the clerical work attached to these cases represents a marked increase in the amount of work required in Wassermann tests.

This increase in the number of specimens submitted by practicing physicians is largely due to a change in policy on the part of the Department of Health, whereby the service is made more accessible to physicians. As the policy now stands physicians may obtain Wassermann service (1) when specimens are submitted by direction of their State District Health Officer, (2) their local board of health, (3) through other distributing agencies approved by the State Department of Health, or (4) patients may be sent directly to the laboratory as formerly. The material change in policy has been brought about by making these agencies distributors of outfits - the policy formerly being to have these agencies obtain the specimens themselves.

ANIMAL INDUSTRY.

The following tables give an analysis of the diagnostic examinations performed for the Department of Animal Industry.

TABLE II.

DIAGNOSTIC EXAMINATIONS FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY.

Result of Examination	Positive	Doubtful	Negative	Unsatisfactory	Total
Complement Fixation Tests for Glanders	266 ¹²	116 ⁶	883 ⁶²	45 ²	1,336 ¹³³⁶
Agglutination Tests for Glanders	111 ⁹	72 ²	145 ⁸⁵	16 ²	355 ⁴²³
Diagnostic Examinations for Rabies	52 ⁵		50 ⁶	4	56 ⁶⁷
Miscellaneous Examination:					
For Glanders bacilli in tissue				1	
For Blackleg in tissue				1	
For Anthrax bacilli in tissue				1	
Total					3*
					1,661 ^{1,661}
					1,523

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ANALYSIS OF BABIES FLAMMATIONS TOGETHER
WITH HISTORY OF PREVIOUS FLAMMATIONS.

Result of Examinations for Rabies	Positive	Negative.	Unsatisfactory or Doubtful
History of Animal Exam- ined.	9 dogs each bit 1 person 1 " " " " " "	14 dogs each bit 1 person 1 dog bit 2 persons 1 dog bit 4 persons	4 dogs injured nobody
Total	18 * dogs bit 25 persons 14 dogs injured nobody 2 cows injured nobody	18 * dogs bit 22 persons 18 dogs injured nobody	4 * dogs injured nobody

* Final figures will be added Dec. 1.

It is to be noted from Table II that agglutination tests for glanders have included. The undertaking of this test on May 15th was in response to a request from the Department of Animal Industry for this work. The additional information obtained from the agglutination test is serviceable to that Department in deciding upon cases where the reaction by the complement fixation test is doubtful and other methods of diagnosis are inconclusive. The agglutination test has also been useful to the Wassermann Laboratory in checking up the correctness of the complement fixation test for glanders.

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE LABORATORY.

COMPLEMENT FIXATION TEST FOR TUBERCULOSIS.

Recent literature on the complement fixation test for tuberculosis indicates that it has decided value in the diagnosis of tuberculosis, where other laboratory findings are negative and clinical manifestations of the disease are inconclusive. It would appear that the test is especially valuable in the diagnosis of incipient tuberculosis so frequently a most difficult one to make. For these reasons it seemed desirable for the Wassermann Laboratory to undertake this work because its equipment and personnel fitted it for such serologic examinations. Accordingly a request for a small appropriation was made and granted to undertake the work. The preliminary work of standardizing the important reagents used in the test is requiring considerable time but the results obtained are indeed encouraging. It is hoped that the test will be placed at the disposal of the physicians and institutions of the Commonwealth at an early date.

SERVICE TO MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS.

Following the general policy inaugurated by public institutions since the beginning of the war, the laboratory has served the government and the various agencies working for it in all instances where requests

for service have been made. As examples of service rendered it may be mentioned that instruction has been given to a government office detailed to the laboratory for the purpose of learning Wassermann technique. The laboratory has also obtained the blood and tested it in / 6 / cases for certain training camps preparing men for military service. It has been serviceable to established government laboratories in testing specimens as an aid in checking the results obtained in these military laboratories.