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IN REPLY PLEASE ADDRESS
HENRY D. CHADWICK, M.D.
TUBERCULOSIS CONTROLLER
HERMAN KIEFER HOSPITAL

June 22, 1933

Dr. Wm. A. Hinton
Chief, Wassermann Laboratory
Department of Public Health
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Dr. Hinton:

I did not reply to your letter of April 11th asking for the incidence of positive blood tests for syphilis in tuberculosis because we were in the midst of a survey, and it has only recently been completed. On June 16th I gave a paper at the meeting of the National Conference of Social Work in Detroit on "The Negro and Tuberculosis". I quote from that paper a section on pulmonary tuberculosis with associated syphilis.

"A study was made to determine the effect of co-existing syphilis in tuberculosis patients under treatment in the Maybury Sanatorium, Herman Kiefer Hospital, Fairview and Bethesda Hospitals. The records of 237 colored and 1,094 white patients were analyzed, and 3.3 per cent of white and 18.5 per cent of colored patients showed a positive Kahn test.

WITH POSITIVE KAHN TESTS ON ADMISSION

	Minimal	Mod. Advanced	Far Advanced	Total	
White patients	3	9	24	36	
With progressive tbc.	1	0	10	11	30.6%
Colored patients	4	9	31	44	
With progressive tbc.	0	1	18	19	43.2%

WITH NEGATIVE KAHN TESTS ON ADMISSION

	Minimal	Mod. Advanced	Far Advanced	Total	
White patients	124	329	605	1058	
With progressive tbc.	0	17	137	154	14.5%
Colored patients	18	54	121	193	
With progressive tbc.	0	6	48	54	27.9%

"These figures show that the incidence of syphilis in colored tuberculosis patients (18.5%) was six times that in the white group (3.3%).

"Progressive tuberculosis in the syphilitic colored patients was 15.3 per cent higher than in the non-syphilitic colored group; in the syphilitic white patients it was 16.1 per cent higher than in the non-syphilitic white group.

"We may draw the inference from this that the association of syphilis unfavorably influences the patient's ability to cope with tuberculosis to about the same degree whether white or colored, 16.1 per cent and 15.3 per cent respectively.

"Progressive tuberculosis in the syphilitic colored patients was 12.3 per cent higher than in the white syphilitic group; in the non-syphilitic colored patients it was 13.4 per cent higher than in the non-syphilitic white group.

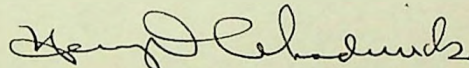
"The above comparison would indicate that the colored patient has an inherent racial susceptibility amounting to approximately 13 per cent in his ability to withstand tuberculosis.

"Syphilis when it occurs as an associated condition in pulmonary tuberculosis makes a further deduction of 15 per cent from the patient's chances of recovery. This malign influence of syphilis is practically the same in an individual patient, whether white or colored. The incidence of syphilis, however, in the Negro was six times that found in the white patients in the group studied and therefore must be a large contributory factor in causing the high mortality from tuberculosis, which in Detroit is six times that of the white rate."

These patients are hospitalized through our tuberculosis clinic, about an equal number of both sexes. The figures for the Negroes and whites were tabulated separately.

I should be very glad to receive from you the results of your inquiry.

Very truly yours,



Henry D. Chadwick, M.D.
Tuberculosis Controller