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HEALTH
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Borough of Ludlow



ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

for the year

1949

Public Health Officers

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH:

JAMES L. GREGORY,

M.B., CH.B., F.R.F.P.S., D.P.H., D.T.M. & HY.

SANITARY INSPECTOR:

H. V. JAMES,

M.I.M. & CY. ENG., CERT. R. SAN. INST.

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INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Borough of Ludlow

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH, 1949

1st June, 1950.

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present the report on the health of the Borough for the year ending 31st December, 1949. It has been drawn up in accordance with the Ministry of Health's Circular 2/50, dated 25th January, 1950.

The estimated population is now 6,240 and in this total there are 1,408 children under the age of 15. The statistics are satisfactory and those for infantile mortality and still births are again lower than the figures for the country as a whole.

Apart from Whooping Cough among the children there have been practically no infectious diseases in the town during the year. There were no notifications of either Scarlet Fever or Diphtheria.

A total of 77 houses were completed during the year and all but two of these were made available through the Council. It is expected that 56 houses will be commenced in 1950. There is still a waiting list of some 312 applicants for houses and much work still remains to be done both in the way of building new houses and of having many of the older ones improved and made to fit in with modern standards. This latter work should be facilitated by the Housing Act, 1949, which makes provision for grants to be given to owners who are willing to improve existing houses.

New legislation regarding the milk supply came into force on 1st October, 1949, and as a result of this the supervision of the production of milk at the farms passes from the local authority to the Ministry of Agriculture. The supervision of pasteurised milk plants passes to the County Council but the local authority is still responsible for dairies other than farm dairies.

Efforts have been made during the year to improve the standard of cleanliness of ice cream sold in the Borough.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES L. GREGORY,

Medical Officer of Health.

BOROUGH OF LUDLOW

STATISTICS - 1949

LIVE BIRTHS—				Total	M.	F.
Legitimate	...	...		115	56	59
Illegitimate	...	...		3	2	1
				—	—	—
Totals				118	58	60
				—	—	—

BIRTH-RATE per 1,000 of population: 17.3.

STILL BIRTHS—				Total	M.	F.
Legitimate	...	...		1	1	—
Illegitimate	...	...		—	—	—
				—	—	—
Totals				1	1	—
				—	—	—

STILL-BIRTH RATE per 1,000 live and still births: 8.4.

DEATHS—				Total	M.	F.
				93	49	44
				—	—	—

DEATH RATE per 1,000 of population (corrected): 12.0.

INFANTILE MORTALITY—		Number of Deaths	Rate per 1,000 live births
(a)	Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate births ...	3	25
(b)	Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate births ...	—	—
(c)	All Infants per 1,000 total (live) births ...	3	25
		—	—

DEATHS from Puerperal Causes—		Number of Deaths	Rate per 1,000 total births
(a)	From Puerperal sepsis ...	—	—
(b)	From other Puerperal causes	—	—
		—	—
Totals ...		Nil	Nil
		—	—

DEATHS from—				Number	
Cancer (all ages)	...	...	...	...	13
Measles	...	...	...	...	—
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	—
Diarrhoea (under two years of age)	...	...	...	...	—
Tuberculosis—					
	Pulmonary	...	...	...	4
	Non-pulmonary	...	...	...	1

Section A

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Area (in acres)	...	...	...	...	1,068
Estimated population (mid 1949)	...	...	...	...	6,240
Number of inhabited houses as at 31st December, 1949	...	...	...	...	1,715
Rateable Value of District	...	...	...	...	£36,167
Product of 1d. Rate	...	...	...	...	£139

POPULATION

The Registrar-General's estimate shows that there has been an increase of 60 during the year. The number of children under the age of 15 years is estimated as being 1,408. The natural increase of population—*i.e.* the excess of births over deaths, was 25.

BIRTHS

There were 118 live births of which number only three were illegitimate. The birth-rate was 17.3 (Eng. and Wales 16.7).

STILL-BIRTHS

Only one still-birth was registered and this gives the very low still-birth rate of 8.4 per 1,000 total (live and still) births.

DEATHS

Ninety-three deaths were registered (49 male and 44 female) and this gives a corrected death rate of 12.0 per 1,000 of the population. The crude death rate was 14.9.

The causes of the deaths will be found at the end of the report but as in former years the chief causes of death are Heart Disease (40), Cancer (13), and Cerebral Haemorrhage (9).

The death-rate for England and Wales was 11.7.

INFANTILE MORTALITY

There were three deaths of infants under one year old, and this gives a rate of 25 per 1,000 live births which compares favourably with the figure of 32 for the whole country. The causes of these infant deaths were Prematurity, Pneumonia, and accidental suffocation. The ages at death were 2 days, 10 weeks, and 2 months.

Taken in conjunction with the low rate of still-births this low figure for infant mortality is very satisfactory indeed. In 1946 the still-births plus infant deaths numbered 15, in 1947 the total was 10, and in 1948 and again in 1949 it has been only four.

MATERNAL MORTALITY

For the third year in succession there was no death from causes associated with child-birth. The last death from such causes was in 1946.

Section B

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

STAFF

There are no changes to record. The officers are a Medical Officer of Health (part time), and a Sanitary Inspector who is also Borough Surveyor, and their names and qualifications are given at the beginning of the report.

LABORATORY FACILITIES

These are provided by the laboratory at Shrewsbury which is directed by the Medical Research Council for the Ministry of Health. All bacteriological reports are sent from the laboratory and also reports on water, milk, ice cream and other foodstuffs. My thanks are due to Dr. Jones and his Staff for the great assistance received throughout the year in so many branches of the work.

NURSING SERVICES IN THE HOME

This service is carried out by the County Council under Part III of the National Health Service Act, 1946.

The Home Help Service is also administered by the County Council and very useful work has been done during the year in cases of sickness in the home, etc. The office of this service is now in Corve Street where applications for Home Helps should be made. (24, Corve Street. Tel. No. 382.)

AMBULANCE SERVICES

This service has operated well during the year and no complaints have been received regarding any delays in getting an ambulance when required. The Central Depot is at Cross Houses, Shrewsbury (Tel. No. Cross Houses 242), where eight ambulances are stationed. In addition to these there are three ambulances stationed at Ludlow (Tel. No. Ludlow 184). If the local ambulances are not available one can be obtained from Cross Houses. In cases where a journey outside the county is required the ambulance should also be obtained from the central depot.

Infectious Diseases can be removed to Monkmoor Hospital by notifying the Matron there (Tel. No. Shrewsbury 2510). It is best in these cases for the doctor in attendance to notify the Medical Officer of Health in the first place and he will arrange for the case to be removed. Should he not be available the Matron should be asked to arrange for the case to be removed if a bed is available.

TREATMENT CENTRES, CLINICS AND HOSPITALS

Particulars of these have been given in previous reports and there are no changes to record.

Section C

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

This section of the report deals with water supplies, sewage disposal, drainage and other matters concerning environmental hygiene and I am indebted to the Borough Surveyor and Inspector for most of the details regarding these schemes.

WATER SUPPLY

The duplicate main to the high level area was completed in June, 1949, and an adequate water supply is now assured to this area for existing houses and for the Council's new housing schemes.

Details of the three sources of supply were given in the report for 1947. An increase in the amount of water from the Fountain Spring source was secured during the year as a result of works carried out in that area.

Chlorination of all water passing to the distribution mains is carried out and of 14 samples submitted for a bacteriological examination and report all were satisfactory.

Mr. James reports that all houses in the Borough are on the main and of these 91 per cent have a supply piped into the house and 9 per cent get water from stand-pipes.

Chemical examinations were also carried out on water from all three sources of supply, the report on the Elan Aqueduct Supply having been received from the Health Department at Birmingham.

CHEMICAL REPORTS

	Burway Supply	Fountain Spring Supply
	Parts per 100,000	
Total Solids in solution	33	24
Nitrogen as Nitrates	0.7	0.1
Nitrites	—	—
Chlorine in Chlorides	1.9	1.3
Oxygen absorbed from Perman- ganate in 4 hrs. at 80 F. ...	0.024	0.056
Free and saline ammonia	Nil	Nil
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.002	0.006
Lead — Copper — Zinc	Nil	Nil
Hardness—in degrees Clark		
Temporary	13.0	10.0
Permanent	4.0	2.0
Total	17	12
pH value	7.2	7.4

These results show that both waters are satisfactory chemically. The reaction of both is neutral or slightly alkaline and the Burway water is slightly harder than that from the Fountain Spring Supply.

(Signed) HAROLD LOWE, M.Sc.

ELAN AQUEDUCT SUPPLY

The following is a chemical report on the supply at Birmingham, which is a composite report on samples taken over the year 1949.

			Parts per 100,000
Total solids	...	...	4.2
Free ammonia	...	...	.000
Albuminoid ammonia	...	...	.003
Nitrogen nitrates	...	...	.01
Oxygen absorbed in 3 hours at 80 F.	...	...	.19
Chlorine in chlorides	...	...	.9
Hardness (as CaCO ₃)	...	...	2.4
Silica (SiO ₄)	...	...	0.19
Total alkalinity (as CaCO ₃)	...	...	0.9

This water is treated with lime at its source in Wales and is therefore apt to cause a deposit of lime salts on iron pipes. Such deposits may ultimately cause a narrowing of the lumen of the pipes and interfere with the flow of water.

SEWERS AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

No extensions were carried out to the existing sewers during the year but 73 houses were connected, making a total of 1,670 houses now with main drainage. Septic tanks are used in such houses as are outside of the sewerage system.

The disposal works have functioned in a satisfactory manner and the media in two of the three filter beds has been cleaned and re-laid. A sample of the effluent was taken on the 22nd February, 1950, and proved to be satisfactory. The following is a copy of the analyst's report on the sample.

			Parts per 100,000
Total solid matter in suspension	...	...	47.0
Nitrogen in Nitrates	...	...	0.63
Nitrites	...	...	0.01
Chlorine in Chlorides	...	...	5.5
Oxygen absorbed from permanganate in 4 hrs. at 80 F.	...	...	0.568
Free and Saline ammonia	...	...	0.400
Albuminoid ammonia	...	...	0.050
pH value	...	...	7
*Dissolved oxygen taken up in 5 days	...	...	1.000
*Suspended solids	...	...	3.6

*Dissolved oxygen should not exceed 2 parts and suspended solids three parts per 100,000.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

The weekly collection has been continued as in previous years. Disposal is by tipping and the Surveyor reports that there is a shortage of earth to cover the used portion of the tip.

By 'controlled' tipping is meant the covering of all refuse within a short time of its disposal so that no nuisance arises. The difficulty often is that no soil is available on the site and the expense of carting soil to the site may be prohibitive.

SALVAGE

The following materials were salvaged during the year. Salvage of waste paper was discontinued during the year (in September), no market being available for the baled waste.

Paper	48 tons	value	£242
Bones	2 tons	„	£12
Scrap Iron	8 tons	„	£19
Total	58 tons	„	£276

The total amount shows a decrease from previous years.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS ACT, 1937

Under the above Act the Local Authority have to enforce the Sections dealing with general sanitation, over-crowding, etc., etc.

There are 26 Factories in the town in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are enforced by the L.A. and 62 other premises where Section 7 is enforced.

The Inspector reports that a total of 59 visits were paid and eight notices served, seven of which were on account of lack of cleanliness. All the defects were remedied.

The L.A. has also a duty to inspect Factories under Section 34 of the Act in order to ascertain if the provision of facilities for saving life in case of fire is adequate and to grant certificates with regard to this matter. The Factory Inspector is also required to draw the attention of the L.A. to any case where he is of the opinion that such facilities are inadequate. The Inspector reports that certificates have been granted in accordance with this Section of the Act.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PEST ACT, 1949

This Act came into force on the 31st March, 1950, and places upon Borough and District Councils the obligation of seeing that their district is kept free from rats and mice as far as is practicable.

Occupiers of premises are required to give notice to the local authority when they become aware that their premises are infested with rats or mice in substantial numbers.

The RATS AND MICE (DESTRUCTION) ACT, 1919, is repealed.

Section D

HOUSING

Number of inhabited houses	...	...	...	...	1715
Number of Council Houses	...	...	...	...	288
Number of Flats owned by Council	...	...	...	...	44
New houses completed in 1949—					
(a) Council houses (traditional)	...	...	...	...	16
(b) „ „ (Airey)	...	...	...	...	56
(c) Flats converted	...	...	...	...	3
(d) Private enterprise	...	...	...	...	2
Total number	...	...	...	...	77
Total applications for houses	...	...	...	...	312

Houses under construction as at 31/12/49.

The only houses being built at the end of the year were two being built by private enterprise.

BUILDING PROGRAMME, 1950

At the end of the year tenders had been received and submitted to the Ministry of Health for 28 two-bedroomed houses to be built at Sandpits Road Site. (Stage 2).

No definite allotment of houses for 1950 has been made by the Ministry as this has been delayed until the 28 two bedroomed houses have been commenced.

In addition to the above houses a total of 28 Aluminium Bungalows have been allocated and these will be erected at Sandpits Road (24) and Temeside (4) sites.

It will be seen from the above figures that the Council now own nearly 20 per cent of the total number of houses in the town and it seems certain that this percentage will increase as time goes on.

The following table shows the respective sites of the new houses completed during the year and also the sites of the 56 houses to be erected in 1950:—

SITE	No. of houses completed in 1949	No. of houses to be commenced in 1950
Dodmore ...	10	—
Sandpits Road (1)	56	—
Sandpits Road (3)	—	24 (Aluminium Bungalows)
Sandpits Road (2)	—	28 (two bedroom)
Temeside ...	—	4 (Aluminium Bungalows)

HOUSING SURVEY

Mr. James states that the survey of houses has now been completed and that it only remains now to allocate the houses examined to the various categories according to their condition.

Although a survey is not yet obligatory on any but the Rural District Councils, many of the urban authorities have carried this work out as it is the only way in which a complete picture of the housing problem in any area can be clearly seen. The knowledge thus obtained should prove of great value in the working of the Housing Act, 1949, in which grants can be given to owners for the reconditioning of their property. Application must be made to the Councils by the owners of properties and improvement grants up to half of the total cost of the work can be given.

INSPECTIONS UNDER THE HOUSING ACTS

The Surveyor reports that 156 houses were inspected and 39 preliminary notices served, 38 of these being complied with.

OVER-CROWDING

In 38 cases of over-crowding reported all were abated and in 22 of these cases this was carried out by the families moving into Council Houses.

HOUSING ACT, 1949

There are many houses in the town which are unfit in one way or another and in some cases they could be re-conditioned while in others the only thing to be done is to have them condemned when it is possible to do this.

Sections 15-18 of this Act give the Local Authority power to acquire property for the purpose of: (a) providing dwellings by means of the conversion of houses or other buildings, and (b) improving dwellings.

Section 20 empowers local authorities to make grants—referred to as “improvement grants,” to private owners (a) for the provision of dwellings by the conversion of houses or other buildings and (b) for the improvement of existing dwellings. These grants are *not* given for ordinary repairs to a house and the amount expended must be between a minimum of £100 and a maximum of £600. The grant to be given is 50 per cent of the cost. The dwellings for which a grant is given must conform, after improvement, with the standard of a fit house and must provide satisfactory accommodation for at least 30 years.

Power is also given to the local authority to acquire and improve property where the owner has failed to do so. In such cases the grant would be payable to the local authority.

Section E

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

MEAT

All meat for human consumption in the town is slaughtered at the Ministry of Food's slaughter house at Craven Arms where it is inspected before being passed as fit for human use.

The Inspector reports that all food shops in the town have been regularly visited and inspected and advice given where necessary.

The following foodstuffs were found to be unfit and were condemned:—

Fish	...	...	7 tins and 360 lbs.
Fruit	...	...	6 tins and 168 lbs.
Milk	...	...	161 tins
Preserves	...	...	3 tins
Meat	...	...	8 tins and 188 lbs.
Cheese	...	...	18 lbs.
Soup	...	...	13 tins
Cake	...	...	1 lb.
Vegetables	...	...	73 tins and 700 lbs.

ICE CREAM

There are 13 ice cream retailers on the register and of these eight are retailers of proprietary brands. Visits have been paid to premises and advice given where necessary.

Of 14 samples taken during the year the reports show that the grades of these were as follows:—

Grade I.	...	1
II.	...	5
III.	...	5
IV.	...	3

The test applied to these samples is the Methylene Blue Test and an effort must be made to get as many of the samples into Grade I or II as it is quite possible to attain these Grades if due attention is paid to the rules governing the preparation and handling of the commodity. Ice Cream can easily be a carrier of disease if it is infected with the germs and therefore it is most important that it should be quite clean in every way when sold.

Unless suitable equipment can be provided and a special part of the shop set aside for its sale, ice cream is best sold in pre-wrapped containers which ensure that it is not touched in any way after it leaves the factory.

MILK

During the year some important Acts and Regulations concerning the milk supply and its supervision came into force and the following is a list of them followed by a brief summary of the chief changes brought about.

Food and Drugs (Milk and Dairies) Act, 1944.

Milk (Special Designations) (Raw Milk) Regulations, 1949.

Milk (Special Designations) Pasteurised and Sterilised Milk,
Regulations, 1949.

Milk (Special Designations) Act, 1949.

The Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949.

-
- (a) The Ministry of Agriculture shall keep a register of all dairy farms and of all dairy farmers.
 - (b) The Ministry of Agriculture shall be responsible for the water supplies to dairy farms.
 - (c) The Local Authority shall be responsible for all dairies which are not also dairy farms and shall keep a register of them and of all persons carrying on the trade of distributor of milk in their district.

- (d) The M.O.H. of any district is given additional powers of control with regard to the spreading of disease by milk through infected persons. He is also given power as regards the disposal of milk which he believes to be infected and likely to spread disease.
- (e) The supervision of all pasteurised and sterilised milk passes to the County Council as the Food and Drug Authority. Licences for these types of milk are also granted by the County Council.
- (f) All producers' licences for T.T. and 'Accredited' milk are to be granted by the Ministry of Agriculture.
- (g) The power of making Milk and Dairies Regulations is to be exercised jointly by the Ministries of Health and Agriculture instead of as formerly by the Ministry of Health alone.

It will be seen from the above summary that sweeping changes have been made as regards the control of milk production and distribution. The whole responsibility for milk production at the farm passes to the Ministry of Agriculture and the future will decide whether this results in a cleaner and safer milk supply than has formerly been the case. It may be added that the Local Authority will still be responsible for granting supplementary licences to sell designated milk in their areas; *e.g.* a producer of T.T. milk will have to get his producer's licence from the Ministry of Agriculture and his supplementary retailer's licence from the Local Authority.

At present there are only two retailers in the town who are not also producers. One of these sells pasteurised milk, and the other sells Tuberculin Tested Milk. In both cases the dairy premises are satisfactory.

Section F

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The following cases of infectious disease were notified during the year:—

NOTIFICATIONS, 1949

DISEASE	Number notified	Admitted to hospital	Deaths
Whooping Cough	48	—	—
Measles	3	—	—
Undulant Fever	1	—	—

The above figures are satisfactory as they show how many of the more serious infectious diseases have now ceased to be a menace to the community. It must not be thought, however, that there is no possibility of their return.

Precautions taken to control such diseases as Small Pox, Diphtheria, Typhoid Fever, etc., etc., must be continued if we are to enjoy immunity from them. Owing to air travel the danger of the introduction of certain diseases from abroad has increased, as passengers who are incubating a disease may reach this country before symptoms have developed.

With regard to Whooping Cough, this remains a real danger to very young children and so far it is not certain that any satisfactory preventive inoculation is available, although opinion differs on this question. The disease is usually brought home to the infants by a school child who gets infected at school and the degree of infectivity is very great indeed. The most serious complication is that of broncho-pneumonia which may be fatal, especially in infants under the age of a year.

Immunisation of children against Diphtheria has been carried out by the County Health Staff at the schools and at the Welfare Centres. It is essential that all parents should have their children immunised about the age of one year against this disease if we are to continue the immunity from what was such a menace to child life.

Undulant Fever is not generally a notifiable disease but is no doubt more common than is known, and especially so in areas where very little of the milk supply is heat treated in any way. The disease is caused by *Brucella abortus* which is also the cause of contagious abortion in cows. In this country it is almost solely spread by cows' milk although it may be acquired direct by dairy workers. If milk is pasteurised the danger of acquiring this disease is avoided. It is probable that the disease may be made notifiable before long.

TUBERCULOSIS

The total number on the register is as follows:—

MALES		FEMALES		TOTAL	
Pulmon.	Non-pulm.	Pulmon.	Non-pulm.		
15	13	16	7	...	51

The above figures show a decrease of three cases as compared with the previous year.

NEW CASES

Only four new cases were notified, this number being less than the average during the last few years. Of the new cases two were male and one female pulmonary and there was one female non-pulmonary case.

DEATHS

Five deaths took place from this disease and of these four were from the pulmonary form (3 males and 1 female) and one (M) was from the non-pulmonary type. The number of deaths in each of the previous two years was only two so that the death-rate is higher this year.

DEATH-RATES

Death-rate per 1,000 (pulmonary)	=	0.641
" " " " (non-pulm.)	=	0.160
Total D.R. (all forms)	=	0.801

Reference was made in last year's report to the taking over of the treatment of cases of Tuberculosis by the Hospital Board.

Tuberculosis is the cause of approximately 400 deaths per week in this country and about 1,000 new cases are notified each week. It is thus the most serious infectious disease of all, many of the diseases which were formerly responsible for large numbers of deaths having now been controlled or prevented.

Since the war an increased amount of interest has been shown in the whole problem of how best to lessen the incidence of Tuberculosis and among other steps taken has been the introduction of mass radiography whereby it is hoped that many early cases will be discovered when they are at an early stage of the disease and thus able to benefit from treatment. Such early discovery will also help to prevent the spread of the disease by such early cases, who might otherwise infect many other contacts in their homes or places of work.

The Ministry of Health during the year have also sanctioned the offer to nurses and others who may in contact with cases of Tuberculosis, of vaccination with B.C.G. which has been found of value in other countries in lessening the incidence of the disease. The results of this new step in prevention will be awaited with great interest by everyone who is interested in this problem.

Another step which should be taken more extensively is that of the education of the people as a whole with regard to the infectious nature of the disease. It is rather surprising that even yet a considerable proportion of the population do not fully realise what a deadly infectious disease Tuberculosis is. Some people hesitate to cause too much alarm by stressing the fact of the infectivity of the disease, but surely it is better to tell people the truth rather than to hide it and allow them to be infected by one of their own household who is a sufferer and infectious.

Every one should know that the greatest danger comes from a case with a positive sputum living in the home. Such cases are

termed 'open' cases and it is possible for a whole family to be literally wiped out by infection from such a case. The danger is of course greater if the case has not been diagnosed and the patient taught how best to avoid infecting others. It may be asked—'Why are all such cases not isolated and kept in communities so as to avoid their being a danger to others?' The reason this is not done is firstly because of the great cost such a plan would necessitate and secondly because of the separation it would entail of the patients from their families.

The Tuberculosis problem has great social and financial aspects and it is in great measure due to these that the prevention of the disease has not had greater success than it would have had if these problems did not exist. One thing is certain and this is that Tuberculosis will never be controlled if the prevention of the disease is not made of the first importance, as it is from this aspect and not from the treatment of the disease that we can hope to conquer it.

CANCER

There were thirteen deaths from Cancer—two more than in the previous year. This gives a death rate of 2.832 per 1,000. It will be seen from the table showing the causes of all deaths in the Borough that Cancer is second in the causes of death.

CAUSES OF DEATH — 1949

CAUSE OF DEATH		Number of Deaths
I. Heart Disease	...	40
II. Cancer	...	13
III. Intra Cranial Vascular diseases	...	9
IV. Tuberculosis	...	5
V. Nephritis	...	5
VI. All other causes	...	21
TOTAL ...		93



