

[Report 1941] / Medical Officer of Health, Wisbech R.D.C.

Contributors

Wisbech (England). Rural District Council.

Publication/Creation

1941

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THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WISBECH.

Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health for 1941.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Medical Officers have been requested by the Ministry of Health to refrain from quoting figures supplied by the Registrar General which may enable any substantial series of local populations to be reconstructed.

We are also asked to confine our remarks to essential matters with the object of saving paper.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

J.F. DAWSON.

Medical Officer of Health.

S T A F F.

Medical Officer of Health.	J.F. Dawson, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.
Sanitary Inspector.	T.A.C. March, M.S.I.A. Cert.R.S.I.

Vital Statistics.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the statistics supplied by the Registrar-General:-

The Birth Rate has increased.

The Death Rate has also increased, but not to the same extent.

The Death Rate of infants under one year of age has also increased.

Laboratory Facilities.
Nursing in the Home.
Clinics.
Hospitals.
Air Raid Precautions.
Ambulance Facilities.

Facilities available under the above headings have not changed since 1940.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk Supply. - Cowsheds, Dairies and Milkshops are inspected frequently to see that the requirements of the Milk and Dairies Order 1926 are being complied with.

Meat and Other Foods. - Every effort is made to ensure that all meat slaughtered in this district is examined prior to being offered for sale for human consumption. Shops, stalls and vehicles are periodically inspected in order to see that the Public Health (Meat) Regulations are being complied with.

WATER SUPPLY.

Although parts of the district enjoy a piped supply no improvement has taken place in those other areas which have to depend chiefly on the weather for supplies.

The Council is however to be complimented on its untiring efforts to improve the conditions existing in more unfortunate districts and also on the encouraging prospects for one area in particular which will no doubt benefit in 1942.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

There is not any system of sewage disposal. House drainage is carried into cesspools.

HOUSING.

No improvements have taken place during the year regarding housing.

During the winter months the air raid shelters at the schools were found to be extremely damp and cold and liable to be injurious to the childrens' health if used frequently by the children. Fortunately they were seldom used.

EVACUEE SCHOOLS.

Unsatisfactory conditions regarding sanitation, water supply and overcrowding in some of the evacuee schools were ultimately rectified by the Education Authorities after the matter had been brought to their notice by the Rural District Council.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

There was an outbreak of Measles at the end of 1940 which continued into the Spring of 1941. In all there were 312 cases notified. I am glad to report that no deaths occurred as a result of this disease.

An outbreak of Diarrhoea and Vomiting occurred during the months of September and October. Although the disease was not in the majority of cases severe a number of cases were confined to bed for some days.

This disease was not confined to the Rural District. Similar outbreaks were occurring all over the Eastern Region at the same time. Although every effort was made to minimise the disease, it was not possible to discover the cause of the outbreak.

The number of scarlet fever cases has increased compared with 1940. The Majority of cases were notified from Parson Drove and Murrow areas. 7 cases occurred at Sealey's Lane, and of this number 5 were Return cases. Return cases are defined as "cases occurring in the same house or elsewhere, apparently traceable to the person released within a period of not less than twenty-four hours, or not more than twenty-eight days, after his return or release from isolation". Return cases have also occurred in Parson Drove village and Mirrow.

In my opinion this high number of Return cases is caused by the inadequate accommodation at the Isolation Hospital. The building in itself is unsuitable for isolating cases of infectious disease, its general layout in no way conforms to the modern idea of an Isolation Hospital and great credit is due to the staff for carrying on under such adverse conditions.

There has been no increase in the number of cases of Diphtheria. I regret to report that one case died. This death would not have occurred had the child been protected against this disease. Let

this be a warning and may I once again impress upon parents the importance of having their children immunised particularly those between the age of one and five years. Parents should regard immunisation against Diphtheria as a duty to their children.

The figures below show the number of children that have been immunised during the year.

Children between 1 - 5 years.	46	or 5.3% of the pre- school population.
Children between 5 - 15 years.	561	or 30.1% of the school going population.

It is expected that these figures will be improved upon during 1942.

TABLE "B".

Table showing incidence of Tuberculosis during 1941.

AGE PERIODS.	New Cases.			Deaths.		
	Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.	Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0- ...						
1- ...			1			1
5- ...			1			
15- ...	2					
25- ...		1				
35- ...					1	
45- ...					1	
55- ...		1				
65 and upwards.						
Totals.	2	2	2	5	2	1