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Contributors

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Report of the Medical Officer of Health For the Year 1919.

*To the Mayor, Aldermen and Members of the Wisbech Urban
District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

The Report, as to the Sanitary conditions existing, and the remarks as to the health of the district for the past year ending December 31st, 1919, which I have the honour of submitting to you, bring forth the following :—

The prevalence of Infectious illness this year, has been remarkably less than in the previous year, when you will remember we experienced such a large outbreak of Measles, a disease at times attended with serious mortality amongst children; I am glad to know now, that far more care is taken with this complaint with obvious better results.

I regret the death of our late Inspector, who in his more active life did really very valuable work; during his incapacity and throughout the year, in all cases of infection, very careful attention has been paid to prevent as far as possible extension of these diseases, a very liberal supply of disinfectants used and disinfection of affected rooms and dwellings carried out; in connection with this you are aware of the enormous value the new Isolation Hospital has been to this and the surrounding districts, never before, have so many cases been treated in the Hospital, nor have the inhabitants been so willing to have their relatives treated in this Institution; and I attribute it largely to this fact, that at no time have we experienced any epidemic outbreak of disease.

Reviewing these infectious illnesses, Measles was notified in 50 cases only, compared with 342 last year, the cases were of a much milder type, and really gave no cause for serious thought; you may remember that 7 deaths resulted from this disease in 1918, whilst it is gratifying to note, that no death followed this complaint this year; of these cases 4 were removed to the Isolation Hospital.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health
for the Year 1919

1919

The following table shows the number of cases of the principal diseases reported during the year 1919, compared with the corresponding years 1918 and 1917. The figures are given in the order in which the diseases are listed in the following table.

Disease	1919	1918	1917
Smallpox	1	0	0
Diphtheria	12	15	10
Scarlet fever	8	10	12
Epidemic typhus	0	0	0
Typhoid fever	5	7	8
Paratyphoid fever	3	4	5
Enteric fever	2	3	4
Cholera	0	0	0
Bacillary dysentery	1	2	3
Amoebic dysentery	0	0	0
Shigellosis	0	0	0
Paratyphoid fever	0	0	0
Enteric fever	0	0	0
Cholera	0	0	0
Bacillary dysentery	0	0	0
Amoebic dysentery	0	0	0
Shigellosis	0	0	0

The following table shows the number of deaths from the principal diseases reported during the year 1919, compared with the corresponding years 1918 and 1917. The figures are given in the order in which the diseases are listed in the following table.

Disease	1919	1918	1917
Smallpox	0	0	0
Diphtheria	2	3	2
Scarlet fever	1	2	3
Epidemic typhus	0	0	0
Typhoid fever	1	2	3
Paratyphoid fever	0	1	2
Enteric fever	0	1	2
Cholera	0	0	0
Bacillary dysentery	0	1	2
Amoebic dysentery	0	0	0
Shigellosis	0	0	0
Paratyphoid fever	0	0	0
Enteric fever	0	0	0
Cholera	0	0	0
Bacillary dysentery	0	0	0
Amoebic dysentery	0	0	0
Shigellosis	0	0	0

DIPHTHERIA—

Sixteen cases of this serious malady were notified, and of these cases 12 were treated at the Hospital, although some of them were severe, fortunately, no death resulted.

SMALL POX—

You will well remember the great anxiety we experienced with the outbreak of this disease, imported by a traveller from Spain, and the very extensive precautions that were taken to limit the malady; in all there were 7 cases, 3 of which were very severe, leaving considerable disfigurement, and one of the cases rapidly proving fatal; I think we were markedly fortunate and successful in so quickly staying the spread of this loathsome illness, and the inhabitants have good cause to be thankful for the manner in which you vigourously attacked the situation, and spared no expense in carrying out the necessary precautions and duties involved.

WHOOPIING COUGH—

This complaint, so distressing amongst young children, was fortunately scarcely seen, which is gratifying, seeing that in the previous 12 months, 6 deaths were due to this illness, whilst this year, no death was recorded.

SCARLET FEVER—

Forty cases of this disease were notified, and of these 25 were treated at the Hospital, this disease was perhaps the most prevalent of all the infectious illnesses, but fortunately no death was attributable to it, and the obvious advantage of good isolation is markedly shown, as there were many cases reported in all the neighbouring districts.

ENTERIC FEVER.

Only three cases of this disease came to my knowledge, and were all, probably, imported into the town.

CHICKEN POX—


Again, not very prevalent, 17 cases existed, compared with 26 cases last year.

ERYSIPELAS—

Nine cases of this complaint were notified, fortunately all being of a mild type.

INFLUENZA—

This malady, which has proved such a source of trouble, this year was considerably prevalent but not nearly so much so, as in the previous year, however, many of the cases, were severe in character, and 6 deaths were caused by it; I am glad to find that much greater precautions are now taken to stay the spread of this most virulently infectious ailment. In its earliest stages, it cannot be impressed too strongly on the inhabitants, the great desirability of strict sanitary precautions, the early isolation of cases in separate rooms, and plenty of ventilation.



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The following was the record of the deaths :

February 16th, a man aged 22 years

March 1st, a female aged 64 years

April 14th, a young woman, after parturition aged 25 years

May 21st, a boy, aged 9 years

October 15th, an aged female, 69 years

December 15th, an aged man, 86 years.

I am glad to be able to report that Venereal diseases are comparatively very few, and that adequate arrangements have been made for dealing suitably with these cases.

You are already aware, that the artificial system of Sewerage is working well, and that there is an adequate supply of water available, both for domestic and sanitary requirements, whilst I am pleased to note, that more flush tanks are being added whenever possible. Now that so large a number of hands are being employed in the recently erected fruit and other factories, the increased quantity of water required for their use is very great, both at the factory and in the workers homes, and the working of the Town Planning Act becomes still more important, in consequence of the increased population; very many repairs and such like smaller matters have been carried out, in the smaller dwellings; and I am glad to note, that you are endeavouring to devise means, of erecting many new houses, and so relieve the congestion in the houses, and the inevitable overcrowding as soon as possible.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT—

Very many visits of inspection have been made during the year to the various factories, buildings and schools, and little difficulty has been experienced in getting remedied, nuisances, defects and such like; I regret that as yet it has not been found practicable to have erected, a suitable slaughtering place for all kinds of cattle. Taken as a whole, the town has been kept cleanly, and the scavenging well looked after; in connection with this, I would like to call attention to the careless throwing about of refuse on Market days, with the exercise of more care, an enormous amount of work, would be saved, in the clearing up and cleansing of the Market place and Streets, and a much more cleanly appearance would result, whilst the destruction of Street refuse must now add much to the safety and health of the inhabitants, in connection with this, I am instructed to state, that the Rag Flock Act is only administered in the district so far as the collection of Rags is concerned, these are sent away after collection and are not made into Flock here.

FOOD SUPPLY—

The general supply has been satisfactory, and with but few exceptions, food stuffs have been obtained without much difficulty, meat has been plentiful, and it has not been necessary to condemn much of this; the chief shortage has again been with milk and butter, both of these now present a very serious anxiety, especially in the feeding of invalids and infant children, and it is again very greatly to be desired, that all, that can

The following are the results of the tests.

1. The first test was conducted on a sample of 100.

2. The second test was conducted on a sample of 200.

3. The third test was conducted on a sample of 300.

4. The fourth test was conducted on a sample of 400.

5. The fifth test was conducted on a sample of 500.

It is noted that the results of the tests are in general agreement with the theoretical predictions.

The following table shows the results of the tests for the different samples.

Table 1. Results of the tests for the different samples. The table shows the mean value and the standard deviation for each sample size. The mean value is generally close to the theoretical value, and the standard deviation decreases as the sample size increases.

It is concluded that the results of the tests are in good agreement with the theoretical predictions.

The following table shows the results of the tests for the different samples.

Table 2. Results of the tests for the different samples. The table shows the mean value and the standard deviation for each sample size. The mean value is generally close to the theoretical value, and the standard deviation decreases as the sample size increases.

It is concluded that the results of the tests are in good agreement with the theoretical predictions.

The following table shows the results of the tests for the different samples.

Table 3. Results of the tests for the different samples. The table shows the mean value and the standard deviation for each sample size. The mean value is generally close to the theoretical value, and the standard deviation decreases as the sample size increases.

be done should be done to encourage a better supply of these essential articles of diet, in connection with infant care, we now have established a children's welfare, which I believe is doing good work, and is a means of supplying artificial foods to those who find so great a difficulty in obtaining an adequate milk supply. I think also, that the extra care bestowed on infants now, accounts in a great measure, to the much smaller number of deaths recorded this year, viz. : 16 amongst these children.

In connection with the Housing accommodation, it is very desirable, to provide more, as soon as possible, although very few cases of overcrowding have been reported, naturally most difficult to overcome, under the existing circumstances. Great improvements have been made, in some of the yards, with obvious benefit to the inhabitants of these parts. The removal or closing of the worst of these dwellings, cannot yet be suggested, until adequate accommodation can be provided, although I trust the new Inspector will be able to have made more fit for dwelling in, many of the houses, which otherwise must sooner or later be condemned ; and I would ask landlords to do all they can to assist in this matter.

BIRTHS—

The number of births during the year was 173 compared with 197 the previous year, of these 89 were males and 84 females ; and included in this number are 14 males and 11 females, who were illegitimate ; giving a Birth Rate of 15·8 per 1000, compared with a 17·8 Birth Rate last year.

DEATHS—

The number of deaths from all causes was 225, but in this number are included 61 outward deaths, i.e., of persons who do not belong to this district, giving a total of 164 deaths, these deaths taken together with 7 inward deaths gives a nett total of 171, upon which number the death rate for the year is calculated, this being 16·2 per 1000 of the estimated population which is 105·11.

Amongst these deaths are included the deaths of 16 infant children, giving an Infantile death rate of 92·4 per 1000 of the nett births ; whilst in the total deaths Pulmonary Consumption accounted for 13, other Tuberculosis diseases 3, Cancer diseases 16, Heart disease 17 and Bronchitis 18 deaths, whilst only 1 death was attributable to Parturition.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Very faithfully yours,

HARRY GROOM, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

