

Annual report of the Medical and Health Department / Colony of Seychelles.

Contributors

Seychelles. Medical and Health Department.

Publication/Creation

Victoria, Mahé Seychelles : G.P.O., [1944]

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COLONY OF SEYCHELLES.

ABBREVIATED
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL and HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

FOR THE YEAR

1944



Published by Command of His Excellency the Governor.

PRINTED BY THE HEAD PRINTER
AT THE GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE,
VICTORIA, MAHÉ, SEYCHELLES.

1946

**Annual Medical and Health report for the Year
ending 31st December, 1944.**

I have the honour to submit for the information of His Excellency the Governor, and for transmission to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State, the Medical Report on the Health and Sanitary conditions of the Seychelles for the year 1944.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

C. R. C. RAINSFORD,

Senior Medical Officer.

To
The Hon. Secretary to Government,
Seychelles.

Chief Clerk

Worshipful

Annual Report of the

Board of Directors

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the above matter. The same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
G. F. C. HARRISON,
Treasurer of the Board.

The Board of Directors
of the

COLONY OF SEYCHELLES.

ABBREVIATED ANNUAL REPORT

On the Medical and Health Department

1st January to 31st December 1944.

I. ADMINISTRATION.

A. STAFF.

The staff of Medical Officers was the same as in 1943 and 1942 i. e. one Senior Medical Officer and 2 Medical Officers in Victoria and an Assistant Medical Officer in Praslin.

The one remaining private medical practitioner left the Colony early in 1944. This threw an additional burden of work on the Government Medical Officers.

The agreement of Dr. de Souza (A. M. O. Praslin) expired at the end of 1943, and he accepted an appointment in Zanzibar. He will be leaving the Colony as soon as a relief can be obtained.

The Hospital Matron Sister Catherine resigned after 18 years devoted service she was replaced by Sister Laurence.

B. NEW BUILDINGS.

The new military ward a permanent building was completed early in 1944 and staffed by the E. A. A. M. C. It took patients from the 3 Services and considerably relieved the limited accommodation at the Civil Hospital. This building will be handed over to Government at the end of hostilities and will be converted into an outpatient block.

Plans were drawn up for the rebuilding of the Cottage Hospital at Praslin. The new unit will contain wards for male and female patients, a small maternity ward and adequate staff quarters. Building will start early in 1945.

C. LEGISLATION.

The following legislation affecting Public Health was enacted in 1944.

1. Government Notification No. 6 of 1944—Amendment to Hospital Regulations (Hospital and Dispensaries Ordinance 1899).

Under the old regulation the doctor admitting a patient to hospital was held responsible that the patient paid the hospital bills, and if he defaulted the doctor could be made to pay.

It was felt that this regulation was unfair to the doctor; under the amended regulation the patient signs an agreement to pay all hospital charges to Government.

2. Government Notification No. 37 of 1944—Defence (Quarantine) Regulations No. 3 of 1944.

The effect of this Regulation is to make it possible for surveillance to be imposed instead of observation in certain cases.

3. Government Notification No. 242 of 1944—Defence treatment of V. D.

These Regulations gave authority to the Senior Medical Officer to have examined and treated if necessary any person who had transmitted V. D. to two individuals.

4. Government Notification No. 254 of 1944—Defence Yellow Fever regulations.

These regulations prohibited the entrance into Seychelles of any person coming from an endemic area unless he or she is in possession of a valid Yellow Fever certificate.

D. FINANCE.

HOSPITAL, MEDICAL AND SANITARY REVENUE.

Hospital, Maternity and Mental Hospital Fees	Rs. 20,858 00
Quarantine Fees	" 105 00
Sale of Medicines	" 3,968 98
Total	Rs. 24,831 98

MEDICAL AND SANITARY EXPENDITURE.

The estimated expenditure for 1944 was :—

Personal Emoluments	R. 72,876
Other Charges	" 76,790
Total	Rs. 149,666

The actual expenditure was :—

Personal Emoluments	Rs. 66,760 73
Other charges	Rs. 68,147 64
Total	Rs. 134,908 37

II. PUBLIC HEALTH.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The general health of the population was fairly good. An epidemic of influenza often complicated by broncho-pneumonia, broke out early in the year and towards the end of the year there was a considerable increase in the number of cases of dysentery and diarrhoea.

The influenza epidemic broke out at first amongst the Pioneers. At this time the Military Hospital was not ready and the worst cases were taken into the Civil Hospital. Very soon civilian cases began to pour in and this institution became over crowded. An emergency Military Hospital was therefore established in a permanent building at Mamelles 2 miles out of Victoria. Staff proved a difficulty. Fortunately at this time Capt. Curran E.A.A.M.C. arrived but without nursing staff and with only a minimum of drugs and equipment. Lady Logan and Mrs. Meade a trained nurse, the wife of a C & W official, came to the rescue with a staff of local girls who had received some training in 1st Aid and Home Nursing as Girl Guides. They rendered yeoman service. Drugs and equipment were supplied from the Civil Hospital on a lease lend basis and two of the local hospital nurses were lent for the duration of the epidemic.

Altogether 95 cases of influenza were treated in the emergency hospital with one death.

At the Seychelles Hospital and other Government Dispensaries during the same time 75 cases of influenza and broncho-pneumonia were treated with no death, many other cases were treated in their own homes.

Dysentery and Diarrhoea :— 180 and 310 cases of dysentery (amoebic) were treated as in and out patients respectively at Seychelles Hospital and 93 and 453 cases are recorded under the headings enteritis, gastro-enteritis and diarrhoea. I have little doubt that had it been possible to carry out modern bacteriological tests some of these cases would have proved to be bacillary dysentery. These diseases were especially prevalent in and around Victoria in the last quarter of the year and coincided with a period of heavy rain following a relative drought. The following table shows the number of cases of Dysentery, Diarrhoea and Enteritis treated at Government hospitals and dispensaries during the past 4 years (figures in brackets signify deaths in Hospital).

	1941		1942		1943		1944	
	Hospital	Disp.	Hospital.	Disp.	Hospital.	Disp.	Hospital.	Disp.
Dysentery	100 (1)	312	97 (1)	160	180 (2)	208	132 (5)	416
Diarrhoea								
Enteritis	57 (1)	336	62	275	67 (2)	524	91 (3)	443
etc.								

It must be remembered that only cases treated at Government Hospitals and dispensaries are shown and that in 1941 and 1942 a number of cases not recorded will have been seen by private doctors.

A marked decrease in the incidence of these diseases can be expected only when the general sanitation of the township of Victoria and other centres of population has been completely over hauled and put on a modern footing. This must await the arrival of the Civil Engineer.

HOSPITAL AND DISPENSARIES.

The number of cases treated at the Seychelles Hospital and outlying dispensaries was :—

In-patients; Seychelles Hospital and Maternity Section	2,547
Cottage Hospital Praslin	107
Total	2,654

Out-patients :	Seychelles Hospital	Anse Royale	Praslin & La Digue
New cases	5,063	1,225	867
Re-attendance	2,454	1,206	2,250
Total	7,517	2,431	3,117

GENERAL DISEASES.

As in former years anaemia, diseases of the respiratory system and diseases of the digestive system form the bulk of cases treated under this heading. 143 cases of pneumonia with 4 deaths were treated in Seychelles Hospital, as against 59 with 7 deaths in 1943. The increase is due to the influenza epidemic already referred to.

The number of patients treated in Hospital for amoebic hepatitis and liver abscess was 149 and 24 with it 1 and 2 deaths, compared with 120 of hepatitis and 17 of liver abscess with one death in 1943.

32 cases of Infective Hepatitis were seen. This disease has been common in Africa and the Middle East during recent years. It has not been noted in Seychelles for some time although it is interesting to note that Dr. Bradley reported outbreaks under the name of Infectious Jaundice in 1916 and 1929. It is a comparatively mild disease and caused no deaths.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.

Mumps :— 8 cases were seen ; all were treated as out-patients.

Dysentery and Gastro Enteritis :—Both these diseases were common. They have been already referred to.

Tuberculosis :—16 cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis were treated in Hospital with 4 deaths and 2 cases of Tubercular Peritonitis with one death. It is unfortunately true that Pulmonary Tuberculosis seems to be on the increase, only 5 cases were treated in 1943.

Helminthic Diseases :—These diseases are still very prevalent. 45 cases were treated in Hospital and 44 as out-patients. In addition many patients who came into hospital for some other diseases were found to be suffering also from helminthiasis and were treated.

Veneral diseases :—Syphilis and Gonorrhoea were both common.

Attendances at the Clinics has improved but too many patient get cured only to become re-infected soon afterwards.

153 cases of Syphilis were treated in the V. D. clinic at Victoria and 27 were admitted to hospital.

The corresponding figures for gonorrhoea were 65 and 52 and for chancroid 4 and 8.

The apparent decrease over the 1943 figures is due to the fact that the Military Hospital took over all cases from the Services.

The following table gives details of the different types of Syphilis seen at the V. D. Clinic.

	Males	Females
Primary	18	8
Secondary	29	17
Tertiary	40	46

The regularity of attendances show an improvement over 1943, 85 Syphilitics came for 10 or more injections.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The estimated population on the 31st December 1944 was 33,919 or 16,652 males and 17,267 females an increase of 298 over 1943.

Births :—846 births were registered as compared with 854 in 1943.

The birth rate was 24.94 as compared with 25.40 in 1943.

Still births :— 42 Still births were registered in 1944 an increase of one over 1943.

Deaths :—491 deaths were registered, an increase of 86 and the death rate was 14.48 against 12.05 in 1943.

Infantile Mortality :—The infantile mortality up to one year was 63.

Causes of deaths :—The table below shows the main causes of deaths and the number under the different heads.

CAUSES OF DEATHS.

	Corresponding No. in International List 1938 Revision.	Number of deaths.
Tetanus	12	1
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	13	22
Other forms of Tuberculosis	14/22	2
Leprosy	23	1
Dysentery (Amœbic)	27	6
undefined		4
Venereal diseases Syphilis	25 (a)	12
other	(c)	1
Other Helminthic diseases	42	1
Other infective or parasitic diseases	43/44	4
Cancer and other tumours (Malignant)	45/55	18
(Non Malignant)	56	1
Diabetes	61	1
Other vitamin deficiency	60, 70, 71	1
Anæmias (a) pernicious	73	4
(a) other		21
Other diseases of the blood	72, 74/76	1
Mental diseases	84	3
Trachoma	88	1
Other diseases of the nervous system	80/3, 85/7	35
Heart diseases	90/5	35
Other diseases of the Circulatory System	96/103	6
Bronchitis (a) acute	106	1
(b) chronic		1
Pneumonia (a) broncho	107	9
(b) lobar		2
(c) un-pecified		2
Other diseases of the respiratory system	104/5, 110/14	16
Diarrhoea and Enteritis		
(a) under 2 years	119	18
(b) over		15
Cirrhosis of Liver	124	2
Other diseases of the liver	125/7	11
Other diseases of the digestive system	123, 128/29	4
Nephritis	130/2	5
Other non-venereal diseases of the genito- urinary system	133/9	11
Toxaemias of pregnancy	144, 147/8	1
Other skin diseases	151/2	1
Ulcers (unspecified)	153	1
Congenital malformations	157	1
Diseases of early infancy		
(a) congenital debility	158	3
(b) premature birth	160	12
(c) other conditions	161	5
Senility	162	101
External causes (c)	169/98	11
Ill-defined causes	199/200	76
		<hr/> 491 <hr/>

HYGIENE AND SANITATION.

1. MOSQUITO AND INSECT BORNE DISEASES

The usual precautions were undertaken to prevent the introduction of anopheline mosquitoes.

Yellow fever :—As *Aedes Aegypti* and possibly other yellow fever vectors are prevalent in the Colony Yellow Fever Regulations were passed prohibiting the entry to the Seychelles from an endemic area of any person not in possession of a valid Yellow Fever inoculation certificate.

There is no Yellow Fever quarantine station in the Colony.

The Chief Sanitary Inspector and 2 learners were sent over to Kenya for a three months course in anti-mosquito control. The Senior Medical Officer paid a brief visit to Kenya in the same connection. (Expenses were paid from a C. D. F., grant). The prevalence of Yellow Fever in East Africa makes it incumbent on Seychelles to become mosquito conscious. It is hoped to start a definite scheme of mosquito control next year.

2. EPIDEMIC AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Small Pox :—There was no case of small pox.

801 infants were vaccinated and 3,704 adults and children re-vaccinated.

Diphtheria :—All suspicious throats were swabbed but no case of diphtheria was detected.

Leprosy :—Conditions at the Leper Settlement, Curieuse, were the same as in the previous year. It has not been possible to obtain religious sisters to help us in the work amongst the lepers. The number of lepers in the Colony at the end of 1944 was :—

In Curieuse Settlement	55
In Home Isolation	20

Total	75
-------	----

Helminthiasis :—7,234 doses of Oil of *Chenopodium* were dispensed at the various clinics throughout the Colony.

OUTLYING ISLANDS.

Dr. Christianson toured some of the Outlying Islands from September to November 1944. He visited Desroches, Poivre, Alphonse, Daros, Farquhar, Providence, St. Pierre, Astove, Cosmoledo, Assumption, and Aldabra. He found that generally speaking the labour camps were kept in a clean and hygienic condition and that the labourers were contented and healthy. He recommended that managers and assistant managers should receive instruction in 1st Aid before proceeding to the islands. The ideal would be to have trained medical officers on all the islands but this is impossible at present.

SCHOOL HYGIENE.

All schools in North Mahé, Praslin and La Digue were inspected by a medical officer. Conditions show little change from 1943. Schools are kept clean and tidy but overcrowding is getting commoner and the need for new modern buildings is becoming more urgent. Helminthiasis and associated anaemias are still too common amongst the pupils.

The Department welcomes the arrival of a full time Director of Education in July 1944 and looks forward to helping him in improving conditions throughout the schools.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE WORK.

1,454 children attended the child welfare clinic and 185 expectant mothers came to ante-natal clinic.

228 babies were born in the Maternity ward at Seychelles Hospital and 28 babies in the Praslin Maternity ward. There were 15 still-births and 2 babies deaths.

DENTAL CLINIC.

The Dental Surgeon visited the schools in Mahé, Praslin and La Digue. The following work was carried out :—

- 1 Schools :—Extractions 786, fillings 154, sealings 18.
- 2 Public dental service :—Extractions 1,990.

PORT HEALTH.

50 ships were granted full pratique.
9 ships were granted partial pratique.
No ship was placed in quarantine.

LABORATORY.

The work done in the Laboratory again showed an increase over the previous year.

Summary of work done :—

Urine examinations	2,768
Faeces	1,105
Sputum	164
Examination of smear and swabs	617
Throat cultures	3
Blood films examined	141
Kahn tests	1,236
Miscellaneous	16
Total	6,050

X-RAY DEPARTMENT.

Summary of work done :—

Radiography

112

PRISON AND ASYLUMS.

CENTRAL PRISON VICTORIA.

The Central Prison was visited as usual by a Medical Officer. The health of the prisoners was satisfactory. There was one death from acute Myocarditis.

MENTAL HOSPITAL ANSE ROYALE.

Number of patients remaining from 1943	34
Admitted during the year	4
Died	2
Discharged as cured	1
Remaining	39
Number of patients remaining from 1943	34
Number of patients out on trial	4
Died	2
Discharged cured	1
Remaining in Hospital at end of 1944	36
Number out on trial	3

PAUPER ASYLUM FIENNES INSTITUTE.

An advisory House Committee was appointed in April 1944.

A new Master was appointed in June 1944.

Both changes proved highly beneficial and resulted in a great improvement in the care and attention given to the inmates.

The daily average number of inmates was 67, there were 47 deaths.

SPECIAL WORK RELATED TO THE WAR.

An E. A. A. M. C. unit with 2 Medical Officers arrived at the beginning of 1944 and established a Station Hospital. This unit took over the medical care of personnel from the three Services. X-Ray, Laboratory examinations and major surgery were done at the Civil Hospital.

It is my pleasure to record that a perfect liason was at once established between the Military and Civil hospitals to their mutual benefit.

C. R. C. RAINSFORD,
Senior Medical Officer.

Diseases and Deaths by Groups Classified in accordance with Manual of International List of causes of Deaths 1938 Edition.

	Seychelles Hospital.			Anse Royale Out-patient.	Praslin and La Digue.		
	In-patient.	Deaths.	Out-patient.		In-Patient.	Deaths.	Out-patient.
I. Infective and parasitic diseases	391	17	871	178	5	...	64
II. Cancer and Other Tumours	28	4	7	4	...	...	3
III. Rheumatism, etc	14	1	520	52	...	...	26
IV. Diseases of Blood, etc.	13	2	449	58	...	...	12
V. Chronic Poisoning and Intoxication	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
VI. Diseases of the Nervous System	118	3	259	72	6	...	84
VII. Diseases of the Circulatory System	64	9	87	41	1	...	4
VIII. Diseases of the Respiratory System	340	9	642	129	2	...	42
IX. Diseases of the Digestive System	529	12	1,410	258	6	...	274
X. Diseases of the Urinary and Genital Systems (non-veneral)	190	9	119	45	7	...	32
XI. Diseases of Pregnancy	348	...	67	...	34	...	36
XII. Diseases of the Skin	253	1	189	152	21	...	141
XIII. Diseases of the Bones	11	...	57	25	3	...	20
XIV. Congenital Malformations	4	...	1	...	...	...	...
XV. Diseases peculiar to 1st year	4	...	42	2	...	...	1
XVI. Senility and Old Age	13	2	128	28	...	...	4
XVII. Violence	196	1	127	151	22	...	96
XVIII. III-Defined Causes	27	1	83	30	...	...	28
Total ...	2,547	71	5,083	1,225	107	...	867

Date		Time		Wind		Sea		Weather		Remarks	
Day	Month	Hour	Min	Dir	Force	Height	Direction	State	Force	Observations	Remarks
1	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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22	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
29	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31	1	12	00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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