

The Midwife.

Central Midwives Board.

Midwife Teachers Diploma Examination.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE.

1.—What are the causes of stillbirth? What has been the trend of the stillbirth rate in England and Wales since 1926? What steps do you think are important in reducing the incidence of stillbirth?

2.—Outline the administrative structure of the National Health Service Act, 1946, enumerating the functions of a local health authority under the Act. Illustrate your answer with a diagram suitable for a class of pupil-midwives, showing the main administrative features of the Act.

3.—What do you know about neonatal enteritis? What measures should be taken in a maternity institution where cases have occurred?

4.—An expectant mother, with two young children, is abandoned by her husband. To whom should she apply for help, and what forms may it take?

5.—Outline the outstanding features of the Midwives Acts.

6.—Name some of the reports on midwifery and allied subjects of national importance which have been published recently and discuss one of them.

Analysis of Deaths in 1947.

Big Increases from Heart Diseases.

The medical tables of the Registrar-General's Statistical Review for 1947,* published on Tuesday, May 31st, record that 515,591 civilians died in England and Wales during that year, an increase of 26,537 over the previous year. This gave a crude death-rate of 12.3 per 1,000 civilian population, compared with 12.0 in the previous year, and an average rate of 12.1 for the ten years 1929-1938. 144,570 of these deaths were due to heart diseases and 77,649 to cancer. These two groups of causes thus accounted for 28.0 per cent. and 15.1 per cent. of the total, respectively: in 1938 these proportions were 24.3 per cent. and 13.9 per cent.

Coronary Disease, Angina Pectoris.

Deaths due to diseases of the coronary arteries and angina pectoris showed an abnormal increase, numbering 33,168 in 1947 compared with 28,580 in the previous year, and 15,409 in 1938. To get a true comparison between those two years it is necessary to discount the changes in the sex and age structure of the population; when this is done, it is shown that, taking the 1938 incidence as 1,000, the corresponding figures in 1947 are 1.851 for men and 1.765 for women. This indicates a total increase of about 80 per cent. in mortality attributed to this cause over the nine years.

Cancer.

Deaths from cancer show that male mortality is still increasing, and that the halt in the decline of female mortality, seen in 1946, was maintained. While for cancer of some sites, such as the mouth and pharynx, mortality is falling for both sexes, other affected sites show great increases. Among the 77,649 deaths from this cause, cancer of the lung contributed 9,535 (7,805 men and 1,730 women), compared with 4,658 (3,609 men and 1,049 women) in 1938. This accounts for three-fifths of the increase in male deaths from cancer.

Deaths of Infants and Mothers.

36,849 children died in 1947 before reaching their first birthday. This gave an infant mortality rate of 41 per

* The Registrar-General's Statistical Review of England and Wales, 1947, Tables, Part I (Medical); H.M. Stationery Office, price 6s. net (or post free from P.O. Box 569, S.E.2., price 6s. 5d.).

1,000 related live births, compared with 43 in 1946, and was the lowest recorded in this country up to that time. It is now known that there was a further fall in 1948 to 34 per 1,000 births (provisional). A new table in this Review shows that, while Greater London had the low rate of 32, in Cheshire and Lancashire together it was 55, that the county boroughs as a whole had a higher average rate (50) than the urban districts or the rural districts at 40 and 37, respectively, and that, of the county boroughs, Bootle had the highest rate with 93, followed by Warrington, 85, and Ghester, 80. 918 women died from maternal causes (excluding abortion), the first time the figure has fallen below a thousand. The rate was 1.02 per thousand live and still births, compared with 1.24 in 1946 and 2.70 in 1938.

Epidemic Diseases.

Diphtheria deaths continued to fall, there being only 242 in 1947, compared with 455 in the previous year and 2,622 in the peak war year, 1941. 23 out of every million children under 15 years of age died from this cause.

Three per million under 15 years of age died from scarlet fever; but at those ages, deaths from measles increased to 69 per million, compared with 22 in the previous year. There was a slight increase in deaths from whooping cough at those ages, being 99 per million compared with 91 and 79 in 1946 and 1945, respectively.

Acute Poliomyelitis.

There were 7,103 civilian cases of this disease notified and 484 people died of it compared with an average of 97 deaths for the previous ten years.

Dysentery.

Notified cases of dysentery amongst civilians were almost halved, numbering 3,739 compared with 7,731 in 1946, and the number of deaths fell from 114 to 77.


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