

The Midwife.

Central Midwives Board.

FIRST EXAMINATION.

August 8th, 1951.

From 2 to 5 p.m.

Candidates are advised to attempt to answer all the questions.

1. Give the reasons for keeping a record chart of mother and baby after delivery.
What information should this chart contain?
2. Describe the vagina, and give its anatomical relations.
What information can be gained from a vaginal examination in the first stage of labour?
3. How do you test for albumin in the urine?
What is the significance of albuminuria in a pregnant woman?
4. A multigravida at the onset of labour is discovered to have an oblique lie. To what may this be due and how should the case be investigated and treated?
5. What do you understand by the term involution?
In what circumstances may this process be delayed and how is it recognised and treated?
6. What steps would you take in the case of a baby in the first week of life that is disinclined to take the breast?

More Deaths and Marriages in March Quarter.

PROVISIONAL FIGURES FOR England and Wales published recently by the Registrar General* show that in the March quarter, 1951, the birth rate fell again and was the lowest for any March quarter since 1942, though still higher than in the years just before the war. The death rate for all ages and the marriage rates were the highest recorded in this country since the corresponding quarter of 1940. The reason for the high death rate was mainly the influenza epidemic. The fact that Easter this year fell in the March quarter contributed to the exceptionally high marriage rate.

DEATHS.

Deaths at all Ages.—There were 205,771 deaths registered in the quarter, representing a rate of 19.0 per thousand population. This was the highest for any quarter since March, 1940, when it was 19.7. The average death rate for March quarter from 1945 to 1949 was 14.8. The exceptionally high rates in 1940 and 1951 were due to the influenza epidemics in both periods, that in 1951 producing an exceptional increase in deaths from causes other than influenza itself, particularly pneumonia. The death rate from influenza in the first quarter of 1951 was 1,477 per million population compared with 226 in the first quarter of 1950, and the death rate from pneumonia (all forms) was 1,356 compared with 717 in the first quarter of 1950.

Infant Mortality (deaths of children under one year of age) shows a slight increase over the previous March quarter and halts the progressive decline which has been observed in this rate for many years, although it remains below the rate for any March quarter before 1950. There were 6,530 deaths of children under one year of age, representing a rate of 38.2 per thousand related live births, compared with the low record figure for a March quarter of 36.8 in the previous year.

STILLBIRTHS.

There were 4,259 stillbirths registered during the quarter, representing a rate of 23.6 per thousand total live and still births, compared with 23.0 in the first quarter of 1950.

BIRTHS.

There has been a gradual decline in the live birth rate since 1947. During this March quarter, 176,299 live births were registered, representing a rate of 16.3 compared with 16.7 in the first quarter of 1950, and the post-war peak of 22.8 in the first quarter of 1947. The figure of 16.3 is still higher than the average for the immediate pre-war years.

MARRIAGES.

Marriages were exceptionally high (Easter fell in the March quarter this year), the number of marriages being 109,187 giving a rate of 20.2 per thousand population, the highest for any March quarter since 1940 when Easter was also included and the rate was 21.0. The average for the March quarters of the preceding five years 1946-50 was 83,436 with a rate of 15.4.

SURVEY OF SICKNESS.

10,476 men and 12,762 women were interviewed about their experience of sickness in the separate months of the December quarter of 1950. The average number of people per month who reported that they had suffered illness or injury of some kind during the month represented 65.9 per cent. of the men and 75.7 per cent. of the women who were interviewed. The corresponding figures for the December quarter of 1949 were 64.9 and 75.6 respectively.

The average number of consultations with doctors in a month was 41.3 for every 100 men interviewed and 49.9 for every 100 women. The average number of days of incapacity in a month due to sickness or injury was 1.08 among both men and women.

Housewives (66.70 per cent. of the women interviewed) had more consultations with doctors than other women (51.9 for every hundred housewives interviewed as against 46.0 for every hundred other women interviewed). Although a higher proportion of housewives suffered some illness or injury (77.7 per cent. per month as against 71.6 per cent. for other women) they reported slightly less incapacity (1.07 days a month as against 1.09 days for the other women).

* The Registrar General's Quarterly Return No. 409, March Quarter, 1951. H.M.S.O., price 1s. 6d. net (or by post from P.O. Box 569, London, S.E.1., price 1s. 7d.).

Bed Shortage in Maternity Hospitals

Describing the bed shortage in maternity hospitals as "an Australian calamity," Dr. Refshauge, Medical Superintendent of the Carlton Women's Hospital, in Melbourne, said: "Some of the babies which have had to be turned out early have died. They could have been saved with proper post-natal care." Her hospital needs 144 beds.

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