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A Note on the Etiology of "Tabardillo," the Typhus Fever of Mexico

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## PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

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### A NOTE ON THE ETIOLOGY OF "TABARDILLO," THE TYPHUS FEVER OF MEXICO.

By John F. Anderson, Director Hygienic Laboratory, and Joseph Goldberger, passed assistant surgeon, United States Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.

In a previous note<sup>a</sup> on the basis of the results of guinea-pig inoculations, we have reported on the nonidentity of Rocky Mountain spotted fever and the typhus fever of Mexico, and at the same time stated that we had made inoculations with blood of typhus fever into rabbits and monkeys, the results of which at that time we were not ready to present. Sufficient time has now elapsed since the inoculations in these animals were made to confirm the results of the experiments in the guinea pigs.

We have now to report some further results of the work, which, while primarily started for the purpose of ascertaining the relationship between Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Mexican typhus, have an important bearing on the problem of the etiology of the typhus fever of Mexico, locally known as "Tabardillo." Up to the date of the present writing (December 16) we have studied twelve cases of this disease. For purposes of easy reference we have numbered these cases serially, and in a later paper we hope to give a summary of the important clinical features presented by each.

Aside from the clinical aspects, these studies embrace cultures and animal inoculations.

#### CULTURES.

Cultures were made with the blood from cases Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11. The blood was drawn from the general circulation. The cases furnishing this blood were in different stages of the disease—from the fifth to the fifteenth day. The blood was planted in standard bouillon in flasks containing 50 c. c., in fermentation tubes, freshly prepared, and on agar or Loeffler's serum slants.

In no instance did we obtain any visible growth.

#### MONKEYS.

We made blood inoculations in two monkeys:

"Bedalia," a female *rhesus*, was inoculated intraperitoneally November 27, 1909, with 10 c. c. of defibrinated blood from case No. 6, on November 30, 1909, with 5 c. c. from case No. 8, and on December 2, 1909, with 5 c. c. of defibrinated blood from case No. 11 diluted with an equal volume of physiological salt solution.

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<sup>a</sup> United States Public Health Reports, Dec., 10, 1909, Vol. XXIV, p. 1861.

On December 7, 1909, eleven days from the first and five from the last inoculation, the temperature of the animal rose and continued to rise, reaching its fastigium on the third day and recording a temperature of 40.6° C. on the seventh day of illness.

On December 19, 1909, there was a critical drop in the temperature of the animal to normal.

After the first two days of fever the animal began to show marked symptoms of illness. On the fourth day blood was drawn from the heart and used for passage into another monkey.

"Jerry," a male capuchin, was inoculated intraperitoneally on November 28, 1909, with 4 c. c. of defibrinated blood from case No. 7, and on December 2, 1909, with 4 c. c. from case No. 11 diluted with an equal volume of physiological salt solution.

On December 3, 1909, six days after the first and one day after the second inoculation, the temperature of the animal began to rise, reaching its maximum, 40.5° C., on the fourth day of illness. This animal showed no definite symptoms other than a slight diminution in his appetite and a marked thirst. On December 11, 1909, his temperature had declined to 38.7° C. The following morning the temperature recorded was 36.6°. It continued to fall, interrupted by more or less marked evening exacerbations, until in the morning of December 16, 1909, the mercury barely rose to 34.3° C. The animal's temperature gradually returned to normal on December 18, 1909.

## UNITED STATES.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General, Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.]

### *Plague-prevention work in California.*

#### Surgeon Blue reports:

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

Last case of human plague: Sickened, January 30, 1908.

Last case of rodent plague: Trapped, October 23, 1908.

*Week ended December 4.*

Premises inspected.....	371
Houses destroyed.....	3
Buildings condemned.....	9
Nuisances abated.....	67
Poisons placed.....	8,460
Rats trapped.....	1,908
Rats found dead.....	38
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Rats identified:	
<i>Mus norvegicus</i> .....	1,542
<i>Mus rattus</i> .....	39
<i>Mus musculus</i> .....	325
<i>Mus alexandrinus</i> .....	40
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Total.....	1,946
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Rats examined bacteriologically.....	1,559
Rats found infected with <i>B. pestis</i> .....	0
Total number of rats found infected to date.....	398