

REPORT ON INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER, 1918.

Ordinary Influenza.

Ordinary influenza became an epidemic in Trentham Camp in September and October, 1918. From the 13th September to the 31st October (inclusive) there were 1,361 cases admitted to hospital. The excessive numbers of admissions overtaxed the ordinary hospital accommodation, and several huts had to be temporarily appropriated as hospital wards. The average stay in hospital was 4·89 days. Men discharged from hospital were not allowed to return to duty for some days afterwards.

The symptoms complained of were chilliness, headache, general aching, malaise, sore throat, and cough. The temperature on admission was variable, ranging from 100 to 103, with an almost constant tendency to fall immediately after admission, becoming normal, and remaining so in many cases, in twenty-four to thirty-six hours. Other cases in which the catarrhal symptoms were more marked and persistent took several days before the temperature became normal, even up to ten days. No case was considered bad enough to be put on the serious list, and there were no deaths, although about the last week in October a few cases showed more serious lung symptoms. On going into a ward where these influenza cases were, the most striking feature was the general coughing that was going on, pointing to the fact that the early symptoms were catarrhal.

There were no serious sequelæ except some transient debility and tachycardia.

During the last week of this epidemic the daily admissions were: October 28th, 3; 29th, 7; 30th, 7; 31st, 2. November 1st, 5; 2nd, 7; 3rd, 4. On the 4th November the admissions rose to 29, and subsequently increased, the epidemic assuming increased virulence. A report of this second epidemic is here given.

"PNEUMONIC INFLUENZA" EPIDEMIC, NOVEMBER, 1918.

A serious epidemic of "pneumonic influenza" became manifest in Trentham Camp on the 4th November. It began suddenly, the hospital admission-rate rising seriously day by day until the 10th, and rapidly declining until the 21st. A few cases had occurred some days earlier of a suspicious nature, as mentioned. During the period from the 4th November until the 31st December there were admitted 1,566 cases. The average stay in hospital was 14·18 days. The parade strength of the camp on the 4th November was 3,270, and the strength on rolls was 4,354. There were 225 cases on the seriously-ill list, a total of 75 deaths attributable to the epidemic, and 5 cases remained in hospital on the 31st December, 1918.

Cases Admitted.

Date.	Cases.	Date.	Cases.
October 28	3	November 8	150
29	7	9	221
30	7	10	294
31	2	11	209
November 1	5	12	135
2	7	13	94
3	4	14	62
4	29	15	50
5	61	16	37
6	137	17	19
7	102	18	17

This epidemic seems to have been connected with week-end leave into Wellington, and the suddenness of its onset taxed the efforts of the Staff to the utmost in providing suddenly the necessary increased accommodation and the attendance on the sick. Barrack-rooms were appropriated as required and converted into temporary wards. Fresh palliasses filled with new straw and fresh blankets were provided for the ordinary barrack-room stretchers. Troops occupying required barrack-rooms were evacuated as quickly as possible into other huts or tents, and the appropriated huts were washed out and sprayed with formalin before the sick were put in. Medical orderlies were put into the huts, and a sister to supervise several huts. The epidemic, however, attacked so many of the medical orderlies and the nursing sisters that volunteers were called for from the lines to assist in attending to the sick in the huts. There was an excellent response to the call for volunteer orderlies, and many of them did really intelligent and excellent work under the supervision of Medical orderlies.

One of the early difficulties in the use of the huts was the absence of latrine accommodation, but the Officer in Charge of Works in camp supplied ordinary wooden pan seats and covers for oil-drums which were provided in the temporary wards. Sawdust and a deodorant solution was used to prevent any nuisance, and the arrangement worked quite satisfactorily. The pans were removed daily by the Camp Sanitary Staff.

Food was first of all served from the hospital central kitchen, later on from No. 8 cookhouse in addition, and later on still from No. 6 cookhouse.

Patients when their temperature became normal were given at least seven days convalescence on full diet, with an extra pint of milk and a pint of beef-tea daily, and was transferred to freshly equipped convalescent huts on both sides of Gaba Tepe Road. It was then that No. 6 cookhouse was appropriated for their use. None of the cases transferred to the convalescent huts had been on the seriously-ill list.

The serious cases were transferred to the main hospital buildings, so that all cases which became serious were transferred to the hospital proper, and no deaths occurred in the huts.