

DIVISION OF TUBERCULOSIS

The general activities of the Division were expanded during the past year and particular attention was given to promoting legislation to deal with tuberculosis.

The Tuberculosis Act passed last session took the control of tuberculosis out of the provisions of the Health Act, 1920, and introduced new measures to assist tuberculous patients and to prevent the spread of the disease.

To assist in obtaining greater accuracy in classification and better control of the disease, a visible record system was instituted in all districts to maintain the tuberculous register.

The use of B.C.G. vaccine in New Zealand as advocated by the World Health Organization has been accepted by the New Zealand Tuberculosis Service and pathologists, and a restricted programme in two provincial hospitals has already commenced by inoculating successive groups of nurses with a reliable vaccine obtained from Australia. B.C.G. vaccination will be extended as vaccinators become skilled in the procedure.

Several recommendations made by the Director of the Division as a result of his visit overseas in 1947 have been accepted and are now being put into effect. The use of B.C.G. in New Zealand has already been mentioned. Mass radiography is being extended and two miniature film units will be available shortly in the Dominion, one for use at Christchurch, and the other at Auckland. A third unit has already arrived, and is being held in Wellington for use in the training unit to be established to train field staff in tuberculin testing, B.C.G. vaccination, and miniature radiography. Unfortunately, difficulty is being experienced in obtaining adequate accommodation and staff to operate these units.

Shortage of adequate hospital and sanatorium accommodation has militated against the hospitalization of as many of the active cases as would be desired, but it is hoped that this position will be relieved as soon as possible.

MORTALITY

The mortality returns for tuberculosis, as supplied by the Government Statistician, are as follows:—

Table 22—Deaths from Tuberculosis, by Years, Race, Pulmonary Forms, Non-pulmonary Forms, and Crude Death-rates (Worked on Mean Population), for Particular Years 1943-48

(Deaths, 1948, subject to further correction)

Year.	Pulmonary.			Non-pulmonary.			All Forms.			On Mean Population Crude Death-rates, All Forms, per 10,000.		
	European.	Maori.	Both Races.	European.	Maori.	Both Races.	European.	Maori.	Both Races.	European.	Maori.	Both Races.
1943	468	264	732	96	91	187	564	355	919	3.72	36.6	5.62
1944	485	285	770	106	87	193	591	372	963	3.81	37.40	5.96
1945	496	292	788	105	81	186	601	373	974	3.77	37.02	5.76
1946	459	292	751	102	103	205	561	395	956	3.38	39.04	5.42
1947	440	275	715	84	75	159	524	350	874	3.09	32.88	4.85
1948	408	207	615	61	68	129	469	275	744	2.71	25.01	4.04

The picture obtained from the table shows a steady decline in all categories and in death-rates from 1943 onwards. On mortality figures alone it would appear that general over-all control exercised in New Zealand is gradually showing satisfactory effect.