

BULLETIN  
OF THE  
WALTER KEMPNER  
FOUNDATION

DURHAM, N. C.  
APRIL, 1953

VOL. II

NO. I

## CLINICAL NOTES

**S**UMMARIES of Dr. Kempner's work, published at intervals in medical journals during the past nine years, have given details of the effects of the rice diet on an increasing number of patients. Beginning with a report on 150 patients in his first article on this subject in 1944, the size of the groups has increased with each publication. About a year ago, objective improvement in 82% of 1,800 patients was described.

However, unless one is specifically interested in these details, vital though they are, and has sufficient background to understand them, statistics can seem pretty cold. Collective scientific results may impress physicians and scientists, and to some extent the layman; but lay readers of these articles are usually interested primarily in how the treatment will affect them personally. For this reason, short summaries of several individual cases have been included in past articles. Many of them described dramatic results which were achieved in just a few months. This time, the history of an individual patient has been chosen to be presented in detail; in this case improvement did not come in three to six weeks or three to six months, but in three to six years.

K. O. came to Dr. Kempner for the first time on February 27, 1948. Fourteen years earlier, in 1934, when she was in her twenties, she had been told that her systolic blood pressure was normal, but that the diastolic blood pressure should be watched. From 1939 to 1941, the following blood pressure readings were obtained: October 1939, 134/100; February 1940, 122/100; May 1941, 170/110; June 1941, 170/100; October 1941, 206/130.

In 1942-43, the systolic blood pressure ranged between 195 and 220, and sympathectomy was repeatedly advised. In September 1943, a bilateral lumbodorsal sympathectomy was done by Dr. Smith-

wick in Boston. For several months after the operation the patient had some difficulty because the blood pressure dropped suddenly when she stood up. Her blood pressure varied a great deal during this time. In July 1944, she was able to return to office work. Approximately one year after operation, the blood pressure had returned to the preoperative level.

In February 1947, she saw Dr. Irving Wright in New York, who made the diagnosis of essential hypertension without complications except possible slight heart involvement. He prescribed rutin, theominal, and later 600 mg. vitamin C daily, to reduce capillary fragility.

By October 1947, the blood pressure was 245/120. The patient was hospitalized in New York and was tried on the strict rice diet. The strict diet was continued for two weeks, and then she was allowed unlimited quantities of all vegetables except onions, cabbage, broccoli and Brussels sprouts. A few weeks later a limited amount of meat, "salt-free" wheat bread and one egg a week were added to the diet. There was little change in blood pressure, and in February 1948, Dr. Wright advised her to go to Durham.

The blood pressure February 27-March 6, 1948 (average of daily readings), was 222/131.\* There were no retinal hemorrhages or exudates. There was an aortic diastolic murmur but the heart was not enlarged. The electrocardiogram was normal. The kidney function was satisfactory. There was no albuminuria. The blood chemistry findings were normal. The chloride concentration in the urine (as mg. NaCl) was 114 mg. per 100 cc. (as compared with 5-15 mg. on the strict rice diet, and 20-30 mg. on the rice diet with the additions usually given by Dr. Kempner).

The rice diet was started on February 27 and was followed very well. After 105 days the patient was discharged. There had been almost no change in blood pressure. It had been 222/131 mm. Hg. when the rice diet was started; it was still 213/122 mm. Hg. (see Fig. 1).

\* All blood pressures given here were taken with the patient lying down.

FIGURE 1.  
GRADUAL DECREASE IN BLOOD PRESSURE DURING  
FIVE YEARS OF TREATMENT WITH THE RICE DIET



Because of the persistent high blood pressure, only very small additions were made to the diet: weekly quantities of 8 oz. potato, 4 oz. tomato, a small amount of onion and 1 oz. meat.

At the first re-check examination two months later, there was still no improvement in blood pressure. The blood pressure average from August 8-14, 1948, was 212/121. The diet had been followed well as far as the patient knew, but the chloride concentration in the urine was found to be 141 mg. as NaCl per 100 cc. The heart was not enlarged. The electrocardiogram was normal. The kidney function was satisfactory. However, a cottony exudate was present in the right eye. This was the first evidence of a serious vascular complication; it showed that even though treatment during the past six months had been good, it was not yet good enough. The vascular disease was still progressing, and the apparently innocuous high blood pressure which had been present for so many

