

THE ROLE THAT FOOD HANDLERS PLAY IN THE DISSEMINATION OF PARASITIC INFECTIONS.

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O'Connor and Wenyon working in Egypt found the greatest percentage of carriers of encysted *Endamoeba histolytica* among cooks and prisoners. This may be explained on the basis of unsanitary conditions of the soil as well as of institutions. People working in kitchens become infected with encysted *Endamoeba histolytica* by handling contaminated vegetables.

However, most of our soil is not contaminated with encysted *Endamoeba histolytica*, but should there be a carrier among the food handlers, fruit and vegetable salads, as well as various cooked foods, may be contaminated and the diseases readily disseminated.

While it may not be necessary to isolate carriers of encysted *Endamoeba histolytica* among food handlers in Egypt or other tropical countries where the disease is endemic, the necessity for isolating such carriers among food handlers in our region is quite obvious.

A year ago seven or eight cases of amoebic dysentery occurred simultaneously, or within short intervals of time in one public place in Chicago. The disease was well distributed among the people of that place: two guests, two housemen, one janitor, one policeman, and a cook. Two of those cases terminated fatally.

The simultaneous occurrence of so many cases of amoebic dysentery in one place under climatic conditions found in Chicago led to the suspicion of the possibility of the presence of a carrier or active case among the food handlers. A survey of the kitchen help disclosed the presence of two carriers of *Endamoeba histolytica*—one vegetable salad girl, one fruit salad girl, and one active case, a night cook. All of them were immediately sent to the hospital for treatment. Since then not a single case of amoebic dysentery has occurred in that place.

Following that the Chicago Department of Health with the cooperation of the University of Illinois College of

Medicine started a general survey of food handlers in all the hotels of Chicago, hospitalizing all carriers of encysted *Endamoeba histolytica*, as well as of hook-worm infections.

Not only is *Endamoeba histolytica* transmitted by means of contaminated food and water, but also *Ascaris lumbricoides*, *Oxyuris vermicularis*, *Trichuris trichiura*, frequently *Ancylostoma*, *Nector*, *Strongyloides*, etc.