

"Cut down the trees and you'll get rid of the mosquitoes," he told the army and local health authorities."

Elizabeth Daily Journal
November 11, 1941

~~Epidemic~~ Malaria in New York

"Every year cases of malaria are reported in New York City. Is it possible that an area so highly sanitized and developed may be laid low by a tropical scourge? This question should occur to all public health workers. Where does the malaria come from, what type is it, how is it transmitted, and what can we do about it so that the health of the non-immune population may not be menaced?

Strangely enough, the malaria we see in New York City comes from Cairo, all the way from Egypt. It seems that drug addicts there found they got a greater kick out of heroin when they took it intravenously or by "shooting the main line" as they call it. Moreover, if a single addict could not afford to buy heroin at the retail price he "chipped in" with five or six others toward the purchase of a wholesale supply. Then they would all gather in a group and take their "shot" using the same syringe. One of them had malaria and passed it along in a syringe to his friends and it's been going that way ever since. Some were sailors who came to America and taught our addicts the habit of "main line shooting". So now we have it in New York and elsewhere. The New York addicts like this system because they can hide a single syringe and use it in a group at one time. They are not so likely to be arrested for "possession."

In the past six years there have been several hundred cases of malaria in Bellevue Hospital alone. The medical examiner has autopsied more than one hundred addicts who died from this disease. Obviously the problem is a serious one for the addicts.

What about the rest of us? Fortunately there are not many mosquitoes in New York but that there are suitable A. quadrimaculatus locally is important. Addicts with malaria are more numerous than hospital admissions indicate; they know about the disease and take quinine. This may relieve the symptoms but they still remain carriers capable of infecting mosquitoes. Drug addicts wander a great deal. If they are not now in contact with mosquitoes capable of transmission, they may go to places where there are plenty of such insects.

What can we do about it? Drug addicts, it seems, should be under medico-legal jurisdiction wherever they are confined, whether in a hospital or a prison. We should make sure that they do not have active or inactive malaria and if they do, we must treat them properly until they are free from the disease. Otherwise, we may have a real epidemic of severe malaria in some large northern American city."

Harry Most, M.D., D.T.M. & H.
Bulletin - October, 1939
Bureau of Criminal Investigation
New York State Police

ACTIVITIES IN MEMBER STATES

Because of the national emergency and the intensive national defense efforts resulting therefrom, malaria-mosquito control work is now