

U.S. Childrens' Health Worsens In 1995 — Report

WASHINGTON - American children smoked more cigarettes, used more cocaine, were generally fatter and got less exercise this year than last, the American Health Foundation disclosed Monday.

In its annual report card on children's health, the foundation graded the United States a D — down from 1994's grade of C-minus — because of low marks in the area of drug, alcohol and tobacco use as well as increases in such preventable diseases as measles.

There was slight improvement in the infant mortality rate, but the United States still trails 22 other industrialized nations in this area, the report said.

It said 19.4 percent of high school seniors smoked cigarettes in 1994, up from 19 percent the previous year and far higher than the foundation's goal for 1998 of 14 percent or less. Nearly a third of seniors used marijuana daily, 30.9 percent compared with 26 percent for the previous year and 22 percent for two years ago, the study said.

For crack cocaine, statistics were equally discouraging with 1.9 percent of high school seniors using the highly addictive drug daily, up from 1.5 percent the previous year.

Twenty-one percent of children aged 12-17 were judged to be obese in 1988-91, the most recent period studied, compared with 15 percent for the period 1976-80.

Fewer children got daily exercise in school, the report said, comparing the most recent statistics for 1993, when 34 percent of ninth- to 12th-graders got daily school exercise, to 1991, when 42 percent did.

On the positive side, fewer children got pertussis, also known as whooping cough, and tetanus, two diseases preventable by vaccines. And fewer teen-agers contracted syphilis and hepatitis B.

AIDS COULD KILL UP TO TWO MILLION AFRICANS BY 2000

ADDIS ABABA - The number of Africans infected with the AIDS virus is rising rapidly and up to two million people on the world's

diseases and disabilities related to poor health behavior, both parents and schools must share responsibility for the health education of children at an early age," foundation president Ernst Wynder said in a statement.

A panel of experts reviewing the report recommended that optimal pre- and post-natal care be made available to at least 95 percent of all pregnant women. In addition, they called for mandatory, comprehensive, long-term school health education programs, beginning in kindergarten or pre-school.

In another study, researchers at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Hyattsville, Maryland, said 11 percent of American children and adolescents are overweight — about twice the level of 10 years ago and more than double the level in the 1960s.

The researchers, who poorest continent could die of the disease within five years, a U.N. official said on Monday.

Kingsley Amoako, executive secretary of the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), said: "The U.N. estimates that of the 15 hard-hit countries in Africa, approximately two million persons could die as a result of AIDS by the year 2000 if the present trend continues unabated." He was addressing an opening session of a three-day AIDS seminar.

He said World Health Organization (WHO) estimates released in April 1995 indicated that almost 20 million adults and children worldwide were infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

The 15 African countries which the U.N. official said were hardest hit by AIDS are Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

CPR COURSES

The City of Las Vegas Doolittle Community Center in cooperation with the C.O.R.E. Program, (Collaborative Organizations for Resources and Education), has arranged to offer a pair of free CPR courses.

The first course takes place Thursday, October 19, at Kit Carson Elementary School, 1735 North "D" Street. The second workshop follows on Thursday, November 2, at Matt Kelly Elementary School, 1900 North "J" Street. Both seminars begin at 5:30 p.m.

Taught by certified Red Cross instructors, the courses are designed for those 16 or older. Students will receive a certified of completion. Call 229-6375 to reserve your seat. Enrollment is limited.

HEALTH

Health District To Hold Drive-Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic

With the winter holidays just around the corner, amongst many exciting activities and upcoming fun, it is often the time of year that many people begin to think more about their health and what they can do to keep themselves in good health.

Unfortunately, much of the time they wait until it is too late. This is especially true with the always dreadful - flu.

Most documented cases of the flu occur between November and April, which is why the Clark County Health District is encouraging Nevada residents to get a head start on early flu vaccinations and be safe - rather than sorry.

To help the community maintain their good health, the Health District will be holding

their annual Drive-thru flu vaccination clinic.

Never having to even get out of your car, has made getting vaccinated easier than it has ever been before. The Health District invites you to get your flu vaccination on Saturday, October 7th or 21st from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. The clinic is to be held in the parking lot of the Health District, located at 625 Shadow Lane (across from Valley Hospital).

A minimal fee of seven dollars will be required and senior citizens with a Medicare card (presented at the time of vaccination only) will not be charged anything.

More information may be obtained by calling the Health District at 383-1351.

Drug Research Targets Diseases of Aging

By Larry Lucas

"Grow old along with me/
The best is yet to be"

When the English poet Robert Browning wrote those lines, it's a safe bet he was still too young to suffer some of the debilitating diseases of aging—diseases such as arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, depression, diabetes or Parkinson's disease. Although people are living a lot longer than they did in Browning's day, many find that chronic ailments keep them from enjoying retirement. Fortunately, pharmaceutical research companies are actively searching for effective treatments for the debilitating diseases of aging.

A recent survey by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) found that 71 U.S. drug companies are currently testing 132 medicines for such diseases.

Alzheimer's disease, which afflicts 10 percent of Americans 65 and older, is the target of 14 potential medicines. Parkinson's disease, which affects more than 1 million Americans, is the focus of 10 research projects. About 40 million Americans suffer from some kind of arthritis, and pharmaceutical companies are researching treatments for several types of this chronic disease. There are 20 medicines in development for rheumatoid arthritis, 7 for osteoarthritis, and 15 for osteoporosis. In addition, there are 11 medicines for bladder and kidney disorders, 9 for depression, 17 for diabetes, 7 for prostate disease and 18 for respiratory and lung disorders.

These diseases are a burden not only to the people who have them—in terms of pain, loss of function and loss of independence—but to society. Alzheimer's disease alone costs Americans

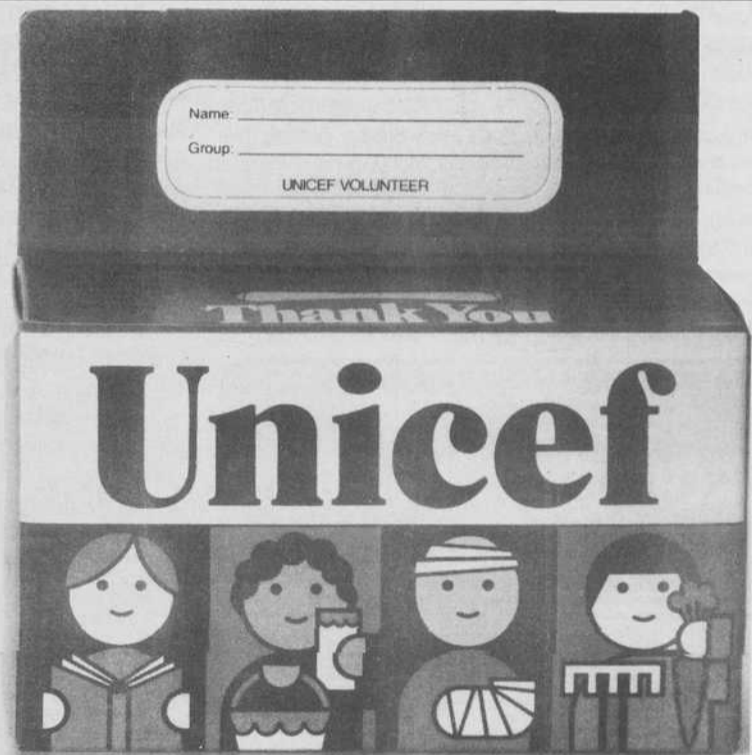


about \$100 billion a year. More than half of all nursing home residents have Alzheimer's or a related disorder. The Alliance for Aging Research estimates that delaying the time that people get Alzheimer's by five years would save almost \$50 billion a year.

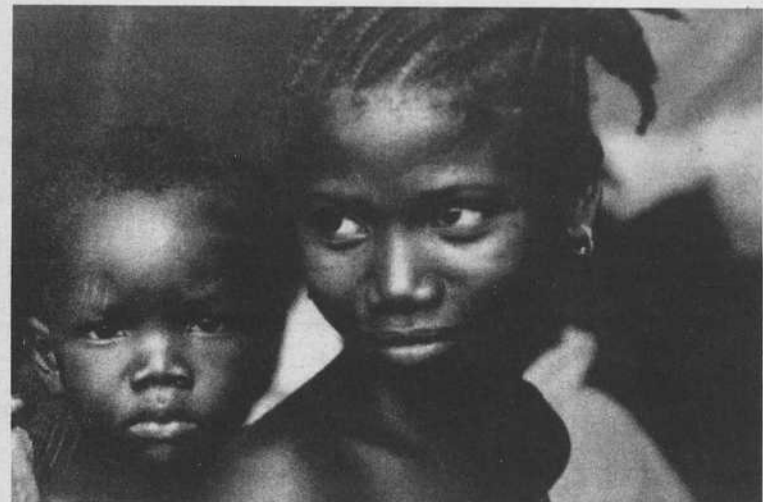
It takes nearly 15 years—and almost \$400 billion—to develop a new medicine and win approval for it from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Most of the medicines listed in the survey are in the later stages of development or have applications pending at the FDA, but it still may be several years before your doctor can prescribe them for you. Fortunately, Congress is looking at ways to speed up the drug development process. This, along with the fact that U.S. drug companies are spending \$15 billion a year to search for cures for these and other diseases, is good news for older Americans.

For a free copy of "New Medicines in Development for Older Americans," write to PhRMA, Communications Division, 1100 15th Street NW, Washington, DC 20005.

Larry Lucas is Associate Vice President of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.



IT'S A SMALL ADDITION TO YOUR CHILD'S COSTUME.



IT'LL BE A BIG ADDITION TO THESE CHILDREN'S LIVES.