

FEDERATED MALAY STATES.

REPORT ON INFANT WELFARE AND MATERNITY WORK IN KUALA LUMPUR FOR THE YEAR 1923.

I.—INFANT WELFARE WORK.

The two important branches of this service are (1) Infant Welfare Centre and (2) Health Visiting.

INFANT WELFARE CENTRE, SULTAN STREET.

This Centre, the first in Kuala Lumpur, was opened in July, 1922. The work is at present carried on in two rooms of a Chinese dwelling house.

The Centre is primarily an educational institution. It provides advice and teaching for young mothers of all nationalities in the care and management of their infants with a view to maintaining them in good health. The work of the Centre is directed rather to the supervision of the healthy infant and the education of the mother, than to the treatment of the sick, but here the incidental treatment of simple ailments is included within its scope.

STAFF.

The staff of the Centre is as follows:

- One Lady Medical Officer;
- One Superintendent, European Nursing Sister;
- Two Health Visitors.

DUTIES OF STAFF.

The Medical Officer's duties are directed entirely to medical work: (a) the examination of mothers and infants, (b) advice to mothers about their own and their infants' health and (c) instructions to Health Visitors in the care and management of individual cases.

The Superintendent is a fully qualified Nursing Sister with special training and experience in Infant Welfare and Maternity Work. Her duties include the training of Health Visitors and supervision of the work of home visiting. She receives the mothers at the Centre, takes notes, examines the clothing, and advises mothers with respect to details that are not purely medical.

The Health Visitors are locally qualified nurses who have been trained in home visiting at this Centre.

ATTENDANCES.

The number of visits paid by women to the Infant Welfare Centre during 1923 was 3,559.

The number of attendances of infants (under one year of age) and children (from one to five years of age) was as follows:

1922.							Infants.		Children.
July	...	...	...	...	...	...	50	...	20
August	...	...	...	...	...	...	105	...	51
September	...	...	...	...	...	...	162	...	206
October	...	...	...	...	...	...	284	...	137
November	...	...	...	...	...	...	298	...	182
December	...	...	...	...	...	...	362	...	176
							1,261	...	772
1923.							Infants.		Children.
January	...	...	...	...	...	...	428	...	193
February	...	...	...	...	...	...	338	...	126
March	...	...	...	...	...	...	395	...	217
April	...	...	...	...	...	...	461	...	217
May	...	...	...	...	...	...	498	...	244
June	...	...	...	...	...	...	407	...	229
July	...	...	...	...	...	...	473	...	283
August	...	...	...	...	...	...	486	...	232
September	...	...	...	...	...	...	483	...	245
October	...	...	...	...	...	...	651	...	260
November	...	...	...	...	...	...	649	...	372
December	...	...	...	...	...	...	508	...	254
							5,777	...	2,872

The number of babies on the weighing list was 216.

CASE RECORDS.

The following example taken from the case records of the Infant Welfare Centre shows the importance of instruction to young mothers in the care and management of infants:

English-speaking Chinese mother, age 17, brought her first baby, aged three months, to the Centre for advice as "the baby was getting thinner and thinner and was always crying." The mother said that she did not know if she was giving the baby sufficient food, that she knew nothing of babies and asked what should she do. The baby weighed 6 pounds 2 ounces and was obviously very much under-nourished; on inquiry it was learned that the mother was giving it feeds only every four or five hours with over-diluted condensed milk. The mother attended the Centre every day for a week for instruction in infant feeding with the result that the baby soon attained normal weight and health.

HEALTH VISITING.

This is the second essential factor in a programme of Infant Welfare. A list of the births notified is sent weekly to the Centre by the Chief Police Officer, Selangor, whose courteous assistance in this matter I wish here to acknowledge. The lists are scrutinized by the Medical Officer who allots to Health Visitors the cases in their special areas.

The work of Health Visitors lies mainly in the homes though on occasion they may assist at the Infant Welfare Centre. They follow up every notified birth, instruct the mother in infant management and encourage her to visit the Centre. They keep a record of their work and report daily to the Superintendent or Medical Officer.

Besides these duties which are directly connected with Infant Welfare Work, Health Visitors sometimes report cases of puerperal sepsis or cases of infectious disease met with in the course of their visits and so ensure early treatment and assist in the control of epidemics.

The prejudice against invasion of the home by strangers, which is more marked in the East than even in the West, is gradually disappearing as the people come to understand that the object is to help and not to harass them.

VISITS.

The number of visits paid by Health Visitors during 1923 was 6,549.

II.—ANTE-NATAL WORK.

The work of the Ante-Natal Clinic includes the advising of expectant mothers in matters relating to their health, not only with regard to conditions directly associated with pregnancy but also with regard to general ailments. Unfortunately many Asiatic women do not yet realise the importance of a medical examination during pregnancy. The object of this examination is to detect early symptoms of disease or physical defects that may interfere with a successful delivery or result later in injury to the health of mother or child. Considerable difficulty was experienced at first in persuading expectant mothers to attend the Clinic but their objections are slowly being overcome.

Weekly consultations are held at the Clinic and patients attend at regular intervals until their confinement. Those whose condition is satisfactory may attend once a month only, while those requiring any medical treatment or care may attend once a week or oftener.

Women in a dangerous state of health, or in whom some deformity or abnormal pelvic condition has been discovered, are advised to seek admission to hospital and arrangements are made for their treatment there.

VENEREAL DISEASES.

Special attention has been paid to the diagnosis and treatment of venereal diseases in pregnant women and to the investigation of the relative importance of this factor in the causation of abortion and still births. This investigation is still in progress and a special report will be made when it is completed. It is already clear, however, from the results of Wassermann tests, and especially from the effects of treatment, that venereal infection plays a large part in the causation of infant mortality in Malaya.

ATTENDANCES.

The number of expectant mothers attending the Ante-Natal Clinic during 1923 was 51.

CASE RECORDS.

The following examples taken from the case records of the Ante-Natal Clinic show the importance of this branch of the work:

- (a) Malay woman, age 25, married nine years; four previous pregnancies resulted in two abortions and two still births. On the occasion of her first visit to the Clinic she was two months pregnant, general condition good, no pelvic abnormality; Wassermann reaction positive. Treated with sulpharsenol and mercury at the Clinic. Healthy baby delivered at full term, weight 8 pounds 6 ounces.
- (b) Chinese woman, age 27, married three years; one previous pregnancy, history of fits before birth of last child, child still born. On the occasion of her first visit to Clinic, examination of urine showed presence of albumin and casts. Patient was admitted to hospital and put under treatment until her condition was normal. Healthy baby, weight 8 pounds, delivered at full term without any complication.

III.—EDUCATION AND PROPAGANDA.

This very important division of the work is carried out mainly at the Centre itself by personal instruction to mothers who are in attendance there. Occasionally it happens that fathers attend for instruction also; one Sikh father said that his wife was not clever and that he had come to learn in her stead.

From the Infant Welfare Advisory Board and the Committee for Public Health Education there are issued from time to time pamphlets and posters in Malay, Tamil, and Chinese, descriptive of various aspects of Infant Welfare and Maternity Work. These have a wide circulation and are of definite value in familiarising the public with the aims and objects of the work. The following pamphlets were issued during 1923:

Convulsions: Causes and Treatment.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum: Causes and Prevention.

Tetanus Neonatorum: Causes and Prevention.

The Feeding of Infants.

The most valuable propaganda work undertaken during the year was the Infant Welfare Exhibit at the Malayan Agri-Horticultural Exhibition held at Kuala Lumpur in July. The exhibit was prepared by the staff of the Infant Welfare Centre assisted by Captain Hoflin; they also attended daily and gave demonstrations. Large numbers of Asiatics of all classes visited the exhibit and displayed the keenest interest in it. An account of the exhibit is appended to this report. At the Agri-Horticultural Exhibition in 1924 it is proposed to have a similar exhibit but more complete.

IV.—STAFF.

Miss Dunsmore filled the post of Superintendent from January to September, 1923, and Miss Goulding during November and December.

Two Health Visitors were attached to the Centre during the greater part of the year.

(Sgd.) M. JOSEPHINE WERE,
Lady Medical Officer.

INFANT WELFARE CENTRE,
KUALA LUMPUR,
1st March, 1924.

REPORT ON THE INFANT WELFARE ADVISORY BOARD EXHIBIT.

This exhibit was the first of its kind to be held in the Federated Malay States.

It consisted of a series of models and specimens designed to illustrate first the instruction given at the Infant Welfare Centre in Kuala Lumpur to women of all nationalities about to become mothers, and to young mothers on the care of their infants. A further object was to arouse the public to a sense of the importance of safeguarding infant life and to encourage the training of all those engaged in maternity and child welfare work.

The exhibit was shown in a part of the building allotted to the Malaria Advisory Board and the Committee for Public Health Education and was divided into four sections.

SECTION I.

PREMATERNITY.

This section illustrated the preparations to be made by a mother for confinement in her own home, the washing and dressing of an infant and the methods of dealing with a premature infant.

It consisted of the following:

1. Waterproof sheeting.
2. Three basins; one for soap and water, one for disinfectant and one for clean water.
3. Two jugs containing hot and cold water, covered with clean towels.
4. Supply of towels.
5. Boracic lotion and swab for eyes.
6. Sterilised ligatures and dressings for cord.
7. Vaseline.
8. Olive oil.
9. Dusting powder.
10. Soap.
11. Two nail brushes (boiled to be quite sterile).
12. Argyrol 25 per cent. as a preventive of Ophthalmia Neonatorum.
13. Slop bucket.
14. Old linen, old blanket to receive the infant.
15. First set of clothing, binder, vest and napkins.

PREMATURE INFANT.

16. Home-made incubator—small clothes basket or hamper padded with cotton wool, heated by hot water bottles in flannel covers.
17. Doll wrapped in cotton wool, as premature infant should be.

WASHING AND DRESSING OF AN INFANT.

18. A baby's box made out of a Nestle's Milk case and arranged with compartments to contain everything necessary for the infant's toilet.

Piece of soft flannel, soap, dusting powder, vaseline, olive oil, boracic lotion, eye swab, pin cushion with needles and cotton, safety pins and scissors.

Mackintosh apron or oil cloth substitute, old apron, a large soft towel.

SECTION II.

CLOTHING OF THE YOUNG CHILD.

This section showed model garments for Tamil, Malay, Chinese and European children. Four dolls were dressed to represent "A" "the Right Way" and "B" "the Wrong Way," of clothing children from one to five years of age. They illustrated suitable, healthy and comfortable methods of clothing, and the reverse methods.

SECTION III.

FEEDING AND PRESERVATION OF FOOD.

19. GLASSES showing the composition of human milk, cows' milk.
20. GLASSES showing "A" modified cows' milk for infants of three months, undergoing digestion—"B" cows' milk improperly prepared. The former showing fine light flocculent masses of curd in suspension, the latter, hard dense curd which is difficult of digestion.
21. MODELS demonstrating the capacity of infants' stomachs at:
 - 1 week,
 - 3 months,
 - 6 months,
 - 12 months of age.
22. BOAT-SHAPED FEEDING BOTTLES containing fluid quantities for feeds at:
 - 1 week,
 - 1 month,
 - 3 months.

23. ENAMELLED BOWL showing method of storing bottle in cold boiled water, when not in use.
24. METHOD OF CLEANSING AND STORING TEATS.
25. BRUSHES FOR CLEANING BOTTLES.
26. ACCURATE MEASURES FOR PREPARING FEEDS.—Graduated glass vessel, table-spoon.
27. VARIETIES OF FEEDING BOTTLES :
 - (i) Medicine bottle.
 - (ii) Boat-shaped bottles.
 - (iii) Long tube feeder, this to show the wrong kind of bottle.
28. SODIUM CITRATE, two grains to one ounce of milk.
29. PREPARED BARLEY.
30. LIME WATER.
31. SUGAR OF MILK.
32. GLAXO.
33. FRUIT JUICE.—A teaspoonful to be given in water three or four times a week after the first month.

VARIETIES : (i) Orange juice.
(ii) Lemon juice.
34. COLD BOILED WATER for infant between feeds.
35. OLIVE OIL for constipation—massage abdomen to tone up muscles of bowels.
36. MEDICINAL PARAFFIN.—Half-teaspoonful doses—to be used if massage fails.
37. POSTERS showing suitable diet for child at :

9 months,
12 months,
18 months of age.
38. VARIETIES OF MILK COVERS :
 - (i) Linen with weighted edges.
 - (ii) Double circular layer of muslin weighted with beads or buttons.
39. JUGS OF STERILISED MILK covered with a double layer of muslin and standing in a basin of cold water. The muslin becomes saturated and therefore keeps the milk cool and free from flies.
40. MILK BOTTLE standing in cold water covered with a tumbler.
41. BABY FOOD STORAGE CUPBOARD.—Made from a milk box. The back and sides have openings covered by wire gauze, the door is made of wire gauze on a wooden frame. The cupboard may be hung on an outside wall in the shade.

SECTION IV.

CARE OF THE TEETH.

42. CLEANSERS.
43. GOOD TYPE OF TOOTH BRUSH.—Note Arrangement of bristles.
44. FOR REMOVAL OF FOOD BETWEEN THE TEETH :
 - (i) Dental floss.
 - (ii) Skein of embroidery silk.
45. VARIETIES OF POWDERS to retain a saline condition of mouth :
 - (i) Precipitated chalk.
 - (ii) Common salt.
 - (iii) Bicarbonate of soda.
 - (iv) Borax.
 - (v) Clean water.
46. FOODS WHICH INDUCE CARIES.—Chocolate, sweet and soft biscuits, sweets and patent foods.

They are non-cleansing and do not cause sufficient exercise for the jaws. The enamel is attacked by germs producing an acid condition of the mouth due to decomposition of food.
47. SUITABLE FOODS WITH WHICH TO FINISH A MEAL.—Apples, radishes, lettuce, hard crusts, etc., and a final drink of water.

They remove slime from the surface of the teeth and increase the blood supply to the teeth and so prevent decay.

48. MODELS OF TEETH showing:

- (i) Healthy tooth.
- (ii) Decayed tooth.
- (iii) Decayed tooth arrested.

VARIETIES.—Incisor, bicuspid and molar.

49. FOR DEVELOPING JAWS AND TEETH:

- (i) Mutton bone.
- (ii) Chicken thigh bone.
- (iii) Hard ring.

SECTION V.

This section showed model cots, baby chair and table, washable toys.

The various sections were explained by posters in English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil.

The exhibit was in charge of a Lady Medical Officer, a European Nursing Sister and two trained Asiatic Health Visitors who were in attendance to explain the exhibits and to give informal demonstrations from time to time.

The show lasted three days and during that time it is estimated that about 20,000 people visited the Infant Welfare Exhibit. They were of all nationalities and the extent to which this work was appreciated is shown by the fact that prominent representatives of both the Chinese and Tamil Communities have requested that arrangements should be made for a permanent exhibit in Kuala Lumpur.

It is hoped to have an exhibit in September, 1923, for the benefit of the delegates to the Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine Congress.

THE WORK AT THE INFANT WELFARE CENTRE, KUALA LUMPUR.

The attendances at the Infant Welfare Centre in Kuala Lumpur increased from less than 50 a month in July, 1922, to over a 1,000 a month in June, 1923. In addition a large number of visits are paid by the Health Visitors.

(Sgd.) M. JOSEPHINE AHERN,
Lady Medical Officer.