

Unreported VD Cases Worry County

By KATHY MORAN

It's not the number of cases of venereal disease that are reported each year that worry Wayne County Health officials; it's the number that are not reported.

They estimate that only 10 per cent of the gonorrhea cases are reported. The syphilis rate is stabilizing somewhat with about 50 to 60 per cent of the cases reported.

The most current statistics with a breakdown of suburban communities are 1967's. They show 68 gonorrhea cases in

suburbia of a total of 459 in Wayne County.

Westland reported 27 cases. Livonia had 18, Plymouth had 14, Canton 14, Farmington Hills 10 and Redford Township 10.

MIKE MILLER, a public health adviser in Wayne County, says the disease is more of a social than a medical problem.

He said the real problem comes in trying to track down the chain of infected people, especially if the one victim is reluctant to send his contacts in for treatment.

He said that the changing moral values and the advent of the birth control pill may be considerable factors, but the lack of information and edu-

cation on sex and venereal disease is of major importance.

"THE ULTIMATE answer to the increase is education," Miller said. "If you start out saying that having sex is immoral and God doesn't like it, then you are in trouble. People won't listen."

He said it is most important to reach the teenagers and young adults who account for more than 60 per cent of the cases in Michigan.

With the increased incidence in teenagers, a state law was enacted allowing physicians to treat teens without requiring parental consent.

GONORRHEA, one of the

five forms of venereal disease, currently is the main concern of health officials. They estimate that only 10 per cent of the cases of the disease are reported.

Part of the problem is that the disease is difficult to detect in women and may not be reported until it has begun its damaging course on the body.

Gonorrhea can leave both male and female victims sterile by producing scar tissue that blocks the passage of eggs or sperm.

Most men develop painful burning signs of gonorrhea between three and eight days after they have become infected.

In women gonorrhea may go

unnoticed until it has caused an arthritic condition or sterility. Because it is so difficult to detect, health officials are encouraging women who think they may have contracted it to be treated for the disease as a safety precaution.

Actual treatment involves getting two shots of penicillin in one day.

SYPHILIS, the other common form of venereal disease, is more under control in Wayne County than gonorrhea, according to Miller. He said that 50 to 60 per cent of the total number of cases are reported.

The first sign of syphilis is a tiny sore which is often pain-

less and may appear anywhere on the body. Three to six weeks later, a rash may appear and a sore throat or headache may develop. These signs are often so inconspicuous that they may be overlooked.

After this stage, the next outward symptom may not appear for 15 or 20 years when large sores may appear on heart or brain damage may have taken place.

A person who has any indication he has the disease can receive free treatment at the Wayne County Department of Health at the corner of Merriam and Michigan Ave. in Elmhurst.

The clinic is open every day except Wednesday from 9

to 11:30 a.m. and on Monday and Friday from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. An evening clinic is open between 7 and 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Call the clinic at 374-2600 ext. 6911.

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AREA DEATHS AND FUNERALS

FRED SACKOW, 71, of 844 Adams, Plymouth, died Aug. 11. He was survived by his wife, Mrs. Fred Sackow, and two daughters, Mrs. Mary Jordan and Mrs. Kathryn Taylor. Burial was in Riverside Cemetery.

MIKE MILLER, a public health adviser in Wayne County, says the disease is more of a social than a medical problem.

GEORGE WINANSKI, 78, of 1220 S. Westland, died Aug. 11. He was survived by his wife, Mrs. George Winanski, and two daughters, Mrs. Mary Jordan and Mrs. Kathryn Taylor. Burial was in Riverside Cemetery.

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