

INTRODUCTION

In July 1972 we learned of the occurrence of a case of "aseptic meningitis" occurring in a U.S. serviceman stationed in Thailand. Within the hour we were able to determine that three other similar cases had occurred apparently originating in the same place. Within one day we had clinical confirmation of our suspicion that these were cases of Japanese encephalitis. The following day, drawing upon experience and information gained from our three years of work with Japanese encephalitis in Chiangmai Valley, we were able to launch a full-scale epidemiological investigation of what proved to be a major outbreak of this disease. At this writing, while the course of the outbreak has not been determined, we are sure that recommendations based upon our study can materially influence the outcome.

This instance demonstrates dramatically that the value of a research effort may not be judged merely on the basis of its published reports, but that one must also consider how the accumulated expertise of a research group can be rapidly applied to an unexpected and emergent situation. The reports that follow then represent not only useful medical information but attest to an invaluable accumulation of professional competence. These reports, I believe, reflect great credit upon the staff of this Laboratory and those who support it.



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