

Bartalos Mihály M.D.
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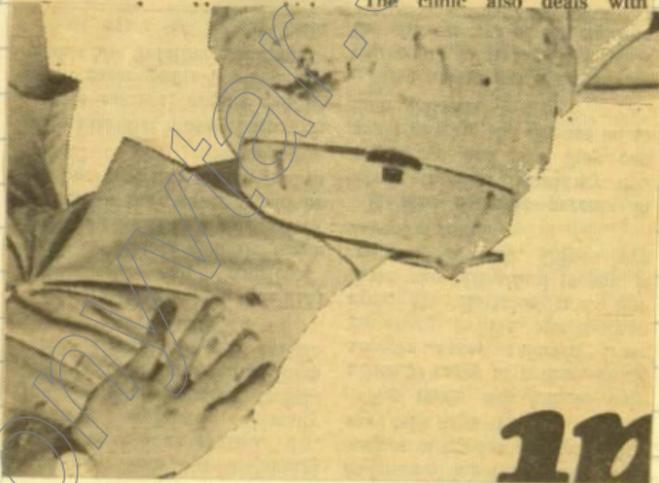
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FROM RETARDATION TO 'INTERSEXUALITY' STATE

New Clinic Probes Hereditary Diseases

By MARTIN COOPER

A child born deformed because his mother was a heroin addict and infants born with both male and female sex organs are among those receiving treatment at a heredity clinic in Freedmen's Hospital.

The clinic, the first here, opened in May with a \$400,000 grant from the U. S. Public Health Service.

VARIETY OF CASES

Cases and problems which have cropped up among the 100 adults and children counselled and treated by Dr. Mihaly Bartalos, clinic director, range from mental retardation, diabetes, or the "intersexuality

The offspring of the drug addict has an ear with three lobes, is hyperactive and has a defective central nervous system.

Dr. Bartalos said the clinic now has three children with both male and female organs under treatment and has helped eight others.

HORMONES

"For example, you may find a female who has a formed testes as well as ovaries," Dr. Bartalos explained. "Usually you give them hormones to help them become more female than male. There are also certain operative procedures."

Dr. Bartalos said a qualified gynecologist can "construct" male or female genitals which are functional to a satisfactory degree — they never would be 100 per cent like nature makes them."

He said that a male born with female external organs can be given male genitals which will enable him to father children.

Most cases of infants with

double sets of genitals are discovered at birth, Dr. Bartalos said. But sometimes the deformity isn't noticed for several years. Then the age of the child, the sex in which it has been reared, and how the child itself feels are taken into consideration before "repairs" are made.

The most common hereditary defect after diabetes is mongolism, which involves severe mental and physical retardation, Dr. Bartalos said.

The clinic also deals with persons who are infertile, children with malformed limbs due to various causes, including exposure of the parent to radioactivity, and persons with hemophilia.

CANCER RESEARCH

"My special interest is in the role of inheritance in cancer," Dr. Bartalos said. "Some kinds of cancer appear to be inherited straightforwardly, while others are affected by environmental conditions as well."

Most of the clinic's patients live at home, and the majority of them are children. Each patient accepted for treatment undergoes personal questioning, 16 hours of laboratory work, and studies of his family tree which may take days or weeks.

The clinic can handle only about 20 cases at a time, so it accepts cases referred from anywhere in the Metropolitan area, Dr. Bartalos said. For those who can afford to pay, it costs \$5 a visit. Others are accepted free.

It also counsels parents in whose families hereditary diseases run and how they can avoid passing the disease on to their children.

"If a parent has a disease he can come to us and ask what the chances are of his children

being affected," Dr. Bartalos said. "Or young couples can come to us before they get married to find out whether they should have children."

"We always try to suggest medical treatment if it is available. If not, we warn

parents about the percentage of chance that the disease may be transmitted. But in each case the decision to have children or not is entirely up to the parent. We are careful not to influence the decision other than by giving the facts."