

The Viability of the Bacillus Pestis.

Rosenau (*Bull. of Hyg. Lab. Marine Hospital Service, 1901*), as a result of an elaborate series of experiments, concludes, first, that the bacillus pestis is not a frail organism, but possesses considerable viability. It remains alive in the cold under 19° C. for a long time, but dies quickly, especially when dried, at the body temperature. Moisture favors the life of the bacillus, and it usually dies in a few days when dried, even in the presence of albuminous matter, provided the temperature is above 30° C. It may remain alive and virulent when dry for months when the temperature is under 19° C. Direct sunlight associated with a temperature over 30° C., kills the organism within a few hours, but the action is not very penetrative. The virulence of the organism is often lost before its destruction. It is unlikely that new, dry merchandise, or clothing or bedding can harbor the infection for a long time, and the bacillus lives for months even, dry, when in an albuminous medium at temperatures below 20° C. It lives for a long time in milk, cheese and butter, but generally dies quickly on the surface of fruits and prepared foods. Although plague is not a water-borne disease, the organism may live a long time in water. As the bacillus does not live long on paper, first-class mail is not apt to carry the infection. The cooler the climate, the greater the danger of conveying the infection on fomites, and so, more extensive disinfection is required in temperate than in tropical regions. Surface disinfection is secured by sulphur fumigation and formaldehyd gas in the usual strengths—the former being preferred in places infected with vermin, is formaldehyd g as may fail to kill the higher forms of animal life. The temperature of 70° C. continued for a short time is invariably fatal to the plague bacillus. The ordinary antiseptics are all efficacious in their usual strength for non-spore-bearing organisms.—*International Medical Magazine.*

How to Make a Diagnosis.

The ability to make a correct diagnosis is not entirely the result of native genius. As Cicero said about the making of a poet, the natural ability is of great importance, but the man of surpassing merit is he who joins to his native talent the power that comes from education. The man of quick perception, of logical mind, and with acute special senses, may make a rapid and apparently intuitive diagnosis. But in its ultimate analysis such a diagnosis is the result of study of books, and of experience at the bedside and in the laboratory; it implies weighing of probabilities and close logical reasoning; it is far from intuitive. This is the hard lesson to teach the young man