



# *The Canadian Addison Society*

## *La Société canadienne d'Addison*

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**ISSUE NO 2 (abridged)**

**Addison info**

**July 1995**

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### **A New Name**

Some of you may notice that we have changed our name from Association to Society. We think the word Society is more suitable for what we are trying to do. It describes a gathering of people with a common goal.

You may also notice that our newsletter has now been named, it is called "Addison info", and its purpose is to inform you about Addison's disease and the people who must live with it.

Isabelle Clift and Greeta Eraser

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### **A History of Addison's Disease**

As part of our mandate to provide basic information about Addison's disease, we are offering in this issue the story of the discovery of Addison's disease and its causes. Addison's disease is named after Thomas Addison, a British doctor who first noticed that the symptoms of some patients showed an unusual pattern. Addison was the first to link these symptoms to a hormone-producing organ. In 1855, he wrote a description of the illness:

"The patient in most cases I have seen, has been observed gradually to fall off in general health; he becomes languid and weak, indisposed to either bodily or mental exertion; the appetite is impaired or entirely lost; ... the pulse small and feeble, ... excessively soft and compressible; the body wastes ... slight pain or uneasiness is from time to time referred to the region of the stomach, and there is occasionally actual vomiting ... It is by no means uncommon for the patient to manifest indications of disturbed cerebral circulation. ... We discover a most remarkable, and so far as I know, characteristic discoloration taking place in the skin — sufficiently marked indeed as generally to have attracted the attention of the patient himself, or of the patient's friends. ... it may be said to present a dingy or smoky appearance, or various tints or shades of deep amber or chestnut brown. ... The body wastes ... the pulse becomes smaller and weaker, and ... the patient at length gradually sinks and expires".

In those days, death from Addison's was almost certain, since cortisone had not been discovered yet. But after the preparation of crude lipid cortical extracts by two physicians in

1929-1930, the stage was set for a rapid growth of knowledge about the secretions of the gland, the way it is controlled, and its role in many biochemical and physiological body functions.

This information about Addison's disease is mostly from Addison Patients in the Netherlands

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### **Meeting of the Society**

The last meeting of the Society was held Saturday April 29 at the home of Evelyn Paul in Perth, Ontario. Quite a few members were present.

The discussion dealt with the Society's course of action. Members decided that for the time being the Society was to concentrate on making itself known. Three courses of action were agreed upon.

- 1) Draft a letter and a bulletin board notice to be mailed to endocrinologists across the country.
  - 2) Prepare a brochure to be distributed in hospital waiting rooms.
  - 3) Make a survey of our members to have a better understanding of Addison's disease. Al McConnell has designed a questionnaire that will be sent to you. It will also be sent to Addisonians in the United States. It is important that you complete it and return it.
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### **The Canadian Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism**

Greeta Fraser has contacted the Canadian Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism who kindly inserted an announcement in their latest bulletin. Since this item was published, we have received inquiries from a few members of the medical profession and we have gained a few members.

Dr. Otto. P. Ronstad, president of the Society, has also agreed to edit the brochure we are planning.

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