

A NEW INSTITUTE AT THE HACETTEPE SCIENCE CENTER: HACETTEPE INSTITUTE OF POPULATION STUDIES

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The first five-year Development Plan of Turkey has changed the traditional population policy, which has been to prohibit contraception and motivate people to reproduce themselves as rapidly as possible. The law annulling the provisions in the Turkish criminal code and the public health law, which prohibited contraception, was passed by the Turkish Parliament in 1965.¹ This law also included among the duties of the Ministry of Health, disseminating knowledge on birth control, informing the public on the necessity of population planning and helping them to plan their families. During the one-and-a-half years since promulgation, the Ministry of Health has trained 285 obstetricians and authorized them to insert intra-uterine devices (IUD). Oral contraceptives have become available in the market.

According to the latest official figures (April 1966), the number of IUD inserted has reached 10,788² and about 40,000 cycles of oral contraceptives are being sold monthly. Considering that the number of fertile women is 5 million and that the crude birth rate is around 45 per thousand, it can be seen that this is a very modest figure. The low response of the people to the use of modern contraceptive methods is contradictory to the results of a KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and Practice) study, which was carried out in 1963.³ According to the results of this study 70 per cent of the men and 79 per cent of the women are in favor of family planning, and willing to learn new methods. Several reasons may be enumerated in order to explain this discrepancy; lack of large-scale educational campaigns to inform the public of the availability of new, effective and safe methods; lack of motivation of the public; insufficiency of health services; reluctance of the medical profession to carry out a population control program; severe shortage of social scientists who will work in field and office to help in educating the public or in carrying out research work.

Considering the great importance of population problems, not only in this country but also throughout the world, the Hacettepe

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Science Center established a new Institute, Hacettepe Institute of Population Studies in July 1966. The main functions of the Institute are research and training in the field of population dynamics. The Institute will also take part in public education activities such as a university extension service, using mass media techniques.

Although the Institute has been established as a part of the Hacettepe Science Center complex, its policy will be to cooperate equally with other institutions and associations active in the field. Priority will be given to efforts which promote the development of population programs in Turkey.

The Institute will establish an Information Center in 1967. The Center will have a reference library, consisting of selected and standard texts, periodicals and other publications and documents, as well as documentary films, film strips, microfilms, etc. The Center will attempt to collect all pertinent publications about Turkey or published in Turkey. The Institute will help to coordinate activities and avoid duplications by keeping records of projects completed or in process, thus functioning as a national clearing house.

The Institute will also help to initiate and sustain at the Hacettepe Science Center, both at graduate and undergraduate levels, specific courses dealing with all aspects of population dynamics. The Master's Degree program in Population Dynamics is designed to meet the needs and requirements of the candidates for higher academic degrees and/or those who eventually plan to participate in population planning work.

One of the main activities of the Institute will be research. The Institute will give priority to projects having operational value. Some of the projects planned for 1967 are studies on administrative problems encountered in the application of population control programs, and family planning practice, the attitudes of doctors toward the population control concept, factors hindering the rapid expansion of the program and a three year study on family planning practices in a rural and urban district.

A newsletter will be published by the Institute giving coverage to developments and activities at the Institute and elsewhere, such as current literature, available periodicals, fellowships, grants, research projects approved, assigned and completed, visits of specialists, seminars, workshops and conferences to be held. One of the ultimate aims of this newsletter is to keep policy makers and project

members informed on population problems, the basic facts and achievements all over the world which might help them in tackling the problem more effectively at home.

The Institute will also publish a yearbook, translations of outstanding textbooks and papers, and original research work sponsored by the Institute.

The population control and planning projects carried out during the previous year by the government has demonstrated once more that the education of the public is essential for a successful campaign. Since the use of social sciences in the control of social problems is just beginning in this country, the Institute will encourage and help the schools and departments of the Hacettepe Science Center as well as others, to extend their work to the general public, to the government and to the voluntary or official organizations interested in the field. To this end, the Institute will seek the cooperation of the Ministries of Defense, Education, Health and Village Affairs, the radio and press as well as voluntary organizations, labor unions and associations of industrial managers.

The Institute has aroused great interest. Its General Board has members from the Ankara, Istanbul and Middle East Technical Universities, from the press and from business and labor circles.