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RESEARCH IN ORAL SURGERY; AN EDITORIAL

F. A. HENNY

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The development of additional, well-conceived research programs in oral surgery is urgently needed. The recent allocation of funds by Congress for adequate research in dentistry highlights the shortcomings of our present facilities and the need for additional personnel to work in this field. Some research should necessarily be basic in nature whereas other work might well have immediate clinical application. In either event, sufficient funds are available for deserving projects and should be utilized in working toward the solution of the many pressing problems that we face.

The correlation between the heavy use of alcohol and tobacco in development of cancer of the mouth which oral surgeons have noted clinically certainly should be corroborated in the laboratory. Such research could easily provide valuable clues to nutritional and chemical states that may be extremely important in the generation of malignant disease. The effect of condylar fractures on growth and development of the mandible is another important project that deserves early attention. Further study of the uses of preserved bone in surgery of the jaws, investigation of the many varied problems of cleft lip and palate, the development of more efficient tranquilizing agents and of agents that would completely control transient bacteremias are but a few examples of the many problems that require early study.

There has been little interest in basic research among oral surgeons in the past. The time has now arrived, however, when a definite program must be evolved if we are to assume our proper responsibilities and occupy a position of justified respect in the future. Such a program should be sponsored, developed and supported by the American Society of Oral Surgeons in cooperation and consultation with the American Dental Association and the National Institute of Dental Research. It must be guided by men who are sufficiently prepared and dedicated to insure its steady growth and development so that in the future we can take pride in having done our part in making the world a better place in which to live. — Fred A. Henny.