

Our Children's Tuberculosis Hospital

By

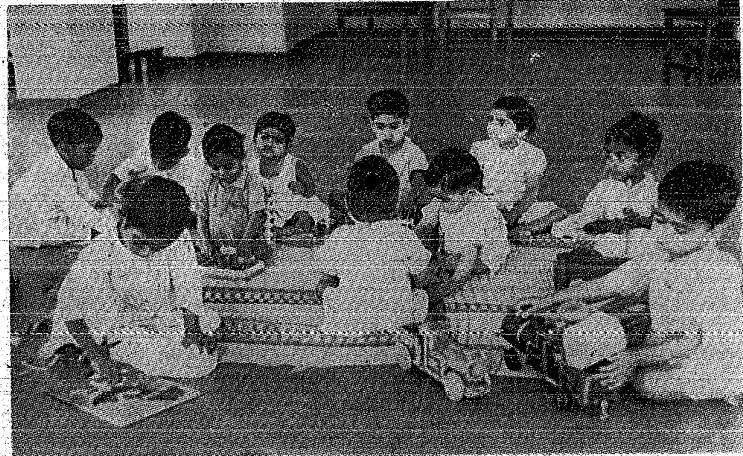
Susan Mathews

U.M.T. Sanatorium, Arogyavaram, Chittoor Dist.

"Sanatorium for kids" loomed large in the press about the time a section for tuberculous children was opened in the Union Mission Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Arogyavaram. It is the first of its kind in India and one of the two sponsored by the Central Government. During the three years of its existence it has already proved

its usefulness to children from many parts of India. It is the centre of attraction in the Sanatorium and is visited by many distinguished workers in the field of tuberculosis.

As a nurse working in this hospital,



Minding their own business in the nursery room

seeing the happy smiles of children every day, and sharing in the joy of nursing these buds who are to bloom into full fledged citizens of India, I thought I might tell you something about the children's hospital attached to this well known sanatorium.



This little one is so fond of her 'baby'.

The hospital provides 76 beds of which 24 are reserved for orthopaedic children, 12 for children below 2 years and the rest for older children with chest lesions. The hospital has facilities for separate accommodation for observation and isolation purposes—cubicles for those under 2 years of age who are very sick and for post-operative cases, and small wards

for older children of both sexes. There is also space for play, both indoor and outdoor, with a variety of interesting sports; there is also a birdhouse, aquarium, fountain and gardens that delight the children.

The wards are designed with large windows, verandahs and courtyard which makes supervision and other work easy. The attractive and pleasing colour schemes in the various rooms are an added pleasure.

On admission each child is subjected to a stay of four weeks in the single rooms of the isolation block. An attendant is allowed for a limited number of days until the child becomes used to routine life, and acquainted with the hospital staff. A great deal of the nurses' time in caring for children is spent in gaining their co-operation. Life in this hospital continues for most of these children for a period of one year or longer. Sometimes under the close care of dedicated doctors, nurses and ward aids, many a pale, frail child literally blossoms into glowing health. Each one of the staff keep it in mind that it is essential to treat the "whole" child — their physical and psychological needs, and put them back on the road to health as soon as possible. For the fulfilment of these tasks, a great deal of patience as well as technical skill is needed, especially when dealing with bed-ridden children, suffering from chronic spine and other bone tuberculosis. Tuberculosis of the bones and joints is a condition which requires not only expert nursing skill and a knowledge of the disease, and processes of the body, but also an understanding and knowledge of human reaction to an illness, which necessitates prolonged hospitalization. The ability to convey those intangible factors that combine to produce high morale, is especially important in long term conditions. The objectives of medical treatment are:—

1. To prevent deformity
2. To overcome the disease
3. To return the individual to his place in the home and community in the best possible condition.

The fulfilment of these objectives is achieved by:

1. Placing the individual at rest.
2. Placing the involved area at absolute rest through some form of immobilization.
3. Providing adequate diet and fresh air.
4. The use of specific drugs and surgical procedures.
5. Instituting a programme of physical and mental recreation and, if necessary, vocational rehabilitation.



Occupational therapy is welcome break in the routine !

All children in bed for prolonged periods need something to do that will satisfy them. Their happiness in hospital can be influenced by providing opportunities for occupation, such as formal teaching and occupational therapy. Our Telugu School Teacher, Nursery Teacher, and Occupational Therapist play an important role in this task. Joy is the key note of all these activities; specially from the Nursery Ward when laughter and song bubble forth from little ones who are sometimes cased in plaster that prevent free movement.

The photos that accompany this article tell their own story. To be with little children is always a joy. To help them toward health and happiness is a nurses privilege.