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Further Health Care Development for Nuns

Catholic Physicians' Guilds

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FURTHER

Health Care Development

FOR NUNS.....

The Committee on Medical Care of Clergy and of Religious of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds and the Catholic Hospital Association, prior to its principal investigation on the Cause of Death of all Nuns in the United States during the Calendar Year — 1963, instituted a pilot project on Cholecystectomies Performed on Nuns during the Calendar Year — 1961.

Questionnaires were sent to the 825 member hospitals of the Catholic Hospital Association and to date 558 have replied. The reported number of cholecystectomies performed on nuns during 1961 is 288. Choledoch-

ostomy accompanied cholecystectomy in 25 instances and appendectomy accompanied cholecystectomy in 25 instances. Liver biopsy was done in 4 cases.

Pathological indications for cholecystectomy included: gangrenous cholecystitis, 3; acute cholecystitis, 21; chronic cholecystitis, 258. Cholecystitis with cholelithiasis was noted in 245 of the patients (80%), and cholecystitis with choledocholithiasis occurred in 12 patients (4%).

The average age of these nuns at the time of surgery was 50 years with distribution according to age groups as follows:

Under 20	3
20 - 29	5
30 - 39	35
40 - 49	71
50 - 59	71
60 - 69	73
70 - 79	23
80 - 89	7

Although 60% of these 288 nuns were over 50 years of age, only 2 died following surgery, representing a mortality rate of slightly more than ½ of 1%. Their gallstones were characteristically less than 1 centi-

meter in diameter and over 50 in number. Furthermore, no pancreatitis, gallbladder malignancy nor cirrhosis of the liver was noted at time of operation in the group of nuns covered by this survey.