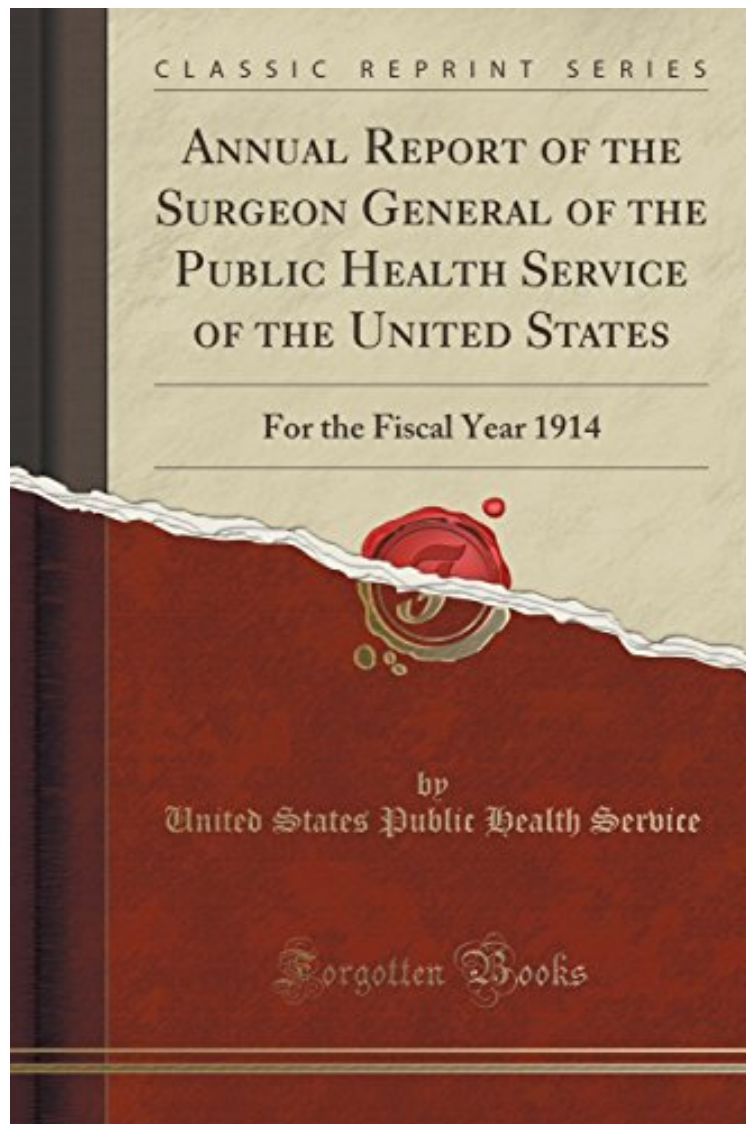


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## Annual Report of the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service of the United States: For the Fiscal Year 1914 (Classic Reprint)

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Excerpt from Annual Report of the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service of the United States: For the Fiscal Year 1914As previously stated, a number of investigations have been carried on during the year, and some of them completed. Others will be continued as may be necessary. All of these activities will be described under subsequent appropriate headings.

**Beriberi at Elizabeth, N. J.**At the request of the local health authorities. Passed Asst. Surg. H. B. Parker was directed to proceed to Elizabeth, N. J., in order to determine the character of several cases of sickness that had been occurring in the county jail located at that place. The symptoms mentioned by the local health officer in his correspondence with the bureau seemed suggestive of beriberi and Dr. Parker's attention was invited to this point. Dr. Parker arrived at Elizabeth November 6, 1913, and after examining in company with the jail physician three of the Cases then in hospital, they were found to be suffering from beriberi. All the prisoners serving sentences of 60 days or more were afterwards examined in the jail and three more cases of beriberi were found among them. The short-term inmates were not examined. During the last three previous years the jail physician had diagnosed as edema 22 cases, which seemed to Dr. Parker strongly suspicious of beriberi. There is a history of the same disease having occurred periodically in the jail during the last 10 or 15 years, it being the opinion of the jail physician that at least 80 per cent of all prisoners serving more than 90 days had been contracting it. The fact that beriberi existed so long in this institution without recognition indicates that it may exist under similar circumstances in other penal establishments in other parts of the country. The complete report of Dr. Parker's investigation was published in the Public Health Reports of February 6, 1914.

**Diphtheria Studies in Detroit, Mich.**In compliance with a request received from the city health officer of Detroit, Mich., previously approved by the State Board of Health of Michigan, Surg. J. Goldberger was, on November 20, 1913, ordered to proceed to that city for the purpose of advising the local authorities in regard to the control of an epidemic of diphtheria then prevailing in Detroit. Surg. Goldberger, after conferring with the city health officer, found the situation presenting two problems: (1) Control of the epidemic itself; (2) possible defects in the bacteriological laboratory of the health department. It was with respect to the second condition that the city health officer desired immediate advice and assistance. On investigation it was found that there had been something radically wrong in the methods used by the city bacteriologist during previous months for the examination of diphtheria cultures. In fact, the conclusion seemed inevitable that release cultures had been thrown away at the laboratory without examination and negative reports made on them.

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