

# Intercom

## Duke University Medical Center

VOLUME 24, NUMBER 9

MARCH 4, 1977

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

### Employee Opinions Sought; Survey Begins Tomorrow

"This is a sincere effort on the part of Duke Medical Center to give employees a chance to say, without revealing their identities, what they really feel about working here."

This is the purpose of the Employee Opinion Survey which begins tomorrow, according to Frank J. Semple, president of National Survey Research Center (NSRC) of Cleveland, Ohio.

The independent firm is conducting the survey. (See *Intercom*, 1/14/77, 2/18/77 and 2/25/77.)

Participation is voluntary, but it is hoped that all medical center biweekly employees will take advantage of the opportunity to give their opinions about what they like and what they believe needs to be improved.

#### Whole-Hearted Cooperation

"This type of research is no easy task," Semple said. "We will need the whole-hearted cooperation of everyone in the work force here at the medical center to be a success."

"Employees can do their part by giving us their frank and complete opinions. Then the administration will be in a position to make this an even better place for everyone to work."

Semple said that his company has seen this happen in other places, "And we're sure it will work here."

#### 54 Sessions

Fifty-four sessions have been scheduled during which participants will fill out a questionnaire, which has been prepared by NSRC and which will be explained by NSRC staff.

In addition to the 52 sessions listed in last week's *Intercom*, two will be held in the nursing school auditorium. One will be Tuesday at 1 p.m. and the other Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.

Supervisors are currently giving each employee a card indicating the time at which she or he may participate, according to Richard Peck, administrative director of Duke Hospital.

Anyone who has not received a card or who has been scheduled for an inconvenient time should check with his or her supervisor, Peck said.

#### Paid While Participating

The questionnaires will take about an hour to complete, and employees will be paid for this time.

There will be about 60 easy-to-answer questions concerning employees' opinions on policies, practices, benefits and

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READ ALL ABOUT IT — That's what Ruby Vareene, dietary hostess (standing) and Betty Greene, diet writer, did when last week's *Intercom* came out. They read all about the Employee Opinion Survey which begins tomorrow. (Photo by John Becton)

### Coronary Patients' Lifestyle To Be Studied

For many years, physicians have had the intuitive feeling that psychological factors play an important role in how well or how poorly coronary heart disease patients respond to treatment.

Unfortunately for patients, however, doctors have had no systematic way of measuring the extent of this role, and the advice they gave varied widely — from good to bad to virtually none at all.

Now, with the help of a five-year, \$103,000 National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute grant, a scientist at the medical center is trying to change all that.

Dr. Redford B. Williams, an associate professor in the Division of Psychosomatic Medicine, said he and research associate Thomas Haney will collect "a wide range of psychological and social information" on patients with

known coronary diseases.

#### Finding Common Denominators

The goal, he said, is to find common denominators which may help physicians at Duke and elsewhere predict what non-medical factors influence readjustment after heart attacks and other coronary problems.

"About 400 patients a year will be extensively interviewed and given psychological tests," Williams said. "We plan to follow these patients over the length of the study."

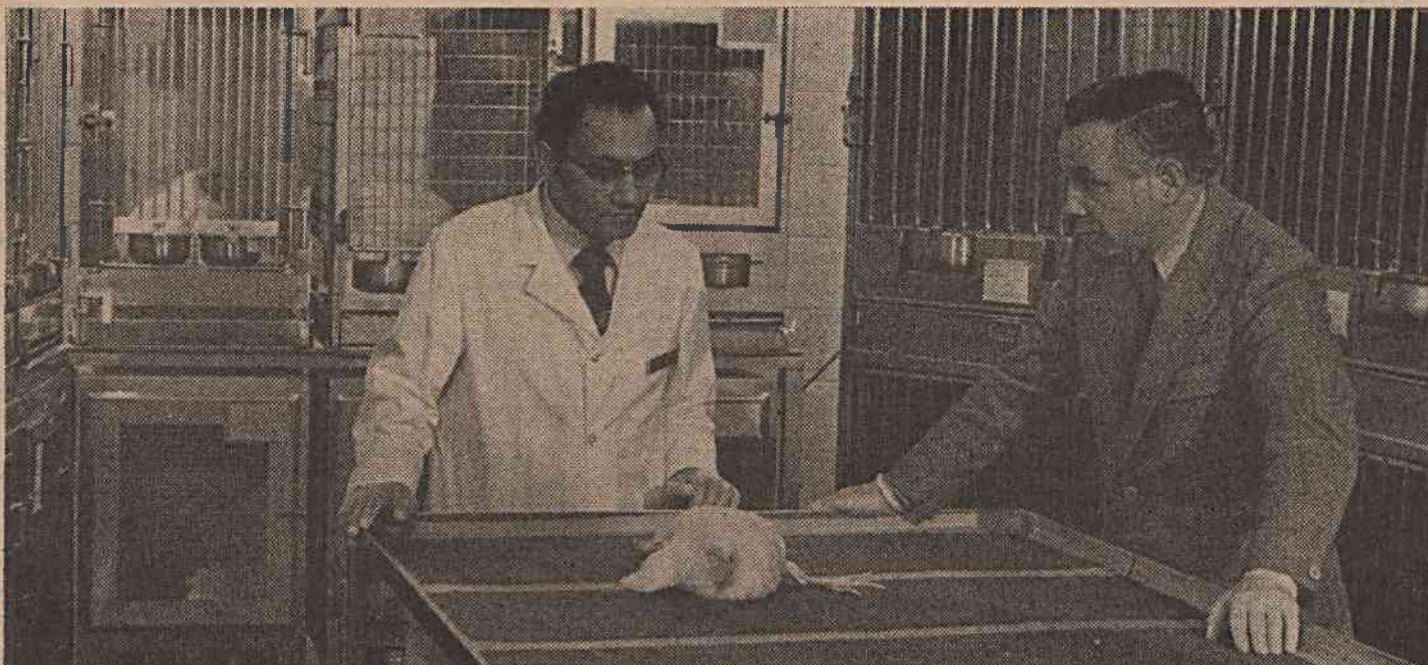
Information on whether the patients returned to work following treatment, how their diseases affected social and family relationships, how well their pain was relieved, how much depression and anxiety they felt, whether they display the hard-driving "Type A" behavior pattern and the like will be fed into a computer for statistical analysis.

#### Psychological Influences

"If we can discover reliable associations which indicate that with a given level of coronary disease someone with a particular psychological characteristic is more apt to have a bad outcome, then we might be able to alter our treatment to improve that outcome," he said.

"For example, if we find that high levels of anxiety or nervous tension are related to continuing chest pain, we could use a variety of techniques to train patients to relax," he pointed out. "In that way, we might be able

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TALKING TURKEY ABOUT CHICKENS—Paul Lowenwarter (at right), a producer for CBS' weekly program "60 Minutes," visited the medical center with a camera crew in February to interview Dr. Mohamed B. Abou-Donia, an assistant professor of physiology and pharmacology here. In the photograph, Abou-Donia is explaining that nerve paralysis in test chickens

varied with the dose and duration of exposure to leptophos, a pesticide believed responsible for nerve damage among workers at a Bayport, Tex., chemical plant and field hands in Egypt. A CBS spokesman said the network expects to air the story on "60 Minutes" at 7 p.m. this Sunday. (Photo by David Williamson)