

Reduced Use of Braces for Teeth Urged at Orthodontists Meet

By JACK ESHELMAN

If Junior's first adult teeth grow in crooked, there is about a 50 per cent chance that he is merely in an "ugly duckling" stage and can escape the pain and expense of wearing corrective braces.

This encouraging news to parents was a major joint in a paper read yesterday by Dr. B. Holly Broadbent of Cleveland, Ohio, before the annual session of the American Association of Orthodontists at the Rairmont Hotel.

26-YEAR STUDY.

Doctor Broadbent is director of Bolton Fund research in facial development at Western Reserve University. His report, refuting the prevalent belief that crooked teeth in children mean inevitable use of bands, disclosed current findings of a twenty-six year study of 5,000 children.

The study's major result is an "atlas" of normal facial angles and measurements of children at varying ages which will be released to the profession next spring.

The premise on which they are to be used is that total facial development determines on whether or not crooked teeth will eventually straighten themselves out naturally, Doctor Broadbent said.

"Permanent teeth come in fully formed on what you might call a juvenile chassis," he explained. "The face doesn't attain its full growth until the individual is about 25 years old. The result used to appear to be mal-alignment of teeth in a child's mouth, but now we call it the 'ugly duckling' stage with the chance that normal growth of the face will straighten out the defect."

DEFERS BRACES.

As a result, he said, he now recommends that use of corrective braces be deferred pending a one to two year study of total facial development.

In his atlas, normal facial proportions and angles are reproduced on pages of transparent plastic. The measurements, obtained from "cephalometric" X-rays, pictures of the child's whole face, may be superimposed, on a series of simi-

lar X-rays of an orthodontist's young patients.

The comparison aids in determining whether, despite crooked teeth, the child's total facial development promises eventual natural correction, eliminating the need for bands.

NOT NEEDED.

In his research, he has found that in about 50 per cent of his cases, metal corrective devices turned out not to be needed.

Another fundamental finding is that crooked teeth do not produce malformed faces, but that the reverse is true.

"The failure of general health retards development of the bones of the face so that when teeth appear they come out crooked," he said. "Childhood diseases and thumb-sucking are other causes."

That, he said, indicates a

greater need for co-operation between orthodontists and pediatricians.

This finding is in line with the aims of Representative Frances Bolton of Ohio who with her son Charles endowed the Bolton research effort, Doctor Broadbent said. Her interest in nursing and health, he declared, led her to support research which relates to a total health picture.

DENTISTS CITED.

Doctor Broadbent singled out Dr. Wendell Wylie, head of the University of California dental college orthodontic division, Dr. William B. Downs of the University of Illinois and Dr. John B. Thompson of Northwestern co-operation with that at Western Reserve.