

Dear Mr. Fish,

Incidence of Spina Bifida

Further to my letter of the 1st May, I have now obtained the figures for the pre-school children suffering from spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus and attach a copy of a note which will be discussed by our Divisional Medical Officers.

I have also checked on our central office records of children known to us of school age or already in special schools.

	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Total</u>
In Special Schools	30	27	57
Awaiting placement in special schools	9	16	25
At ordinary schools (figures probably incomplete)	12	12	24

The year of birth is as follows:-

1965	1
1964	2
1963	20
1962	12
1961	8
1960	18
1959	7
1958	8
1957	6
1956	13
1955	4
1954	3
1953	2
1952	2

My forecast of the need for special places appears to have been an under-estimate.

Yours sincerely,

Principal Medical Officer,  
School Health Service

Mr. J. R. Fish,  
H.M. Inspector,  
Department of Education and Science,  
City House,  
Leeds, 1.

Incidence of Spina Bifida and  
Hydrocephalus Cases in the West Riding

Pre-school Age

Following Divisional Circular No.44/68 of the 16th February, 1968, replies have now been received from all Divisions. Some medical officers included all known cases; others only those likely to require special educational treatment later; in some infants it is not yet possible to make a final decision. Division 31 may have further cases to report.

To summarize:-

Total pre-school children referred:

175

Year of birth	Sex			Total	Probable associated severe retardation	Probably fit for ordinary school
	M.	F.	Not classified			
1968	4	1	4	9		
1967	24	17	1	42		4
1966	20	22	-	42	3	2
1965	17	17	2	36	3	1
1964	19	7		26	4	3
1963	9	11		20	1	2
(Not of school age)						
TOTALS	93	75	7	175	11	12

The national figures for 1966 give an incidence of 1.4 per 1,000 children born alive with spina bifida. Lorber suggests that at least 40 per cent will survive until school age. On these figures one would expect approximately 42 new cases per year born alive in the West Riding with 17 attaining school age.

The present series is incomplete and also includes hydrocephalus but it will be noted that in the 1967 and 1966 returns 42 infants each year have survived to date with spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus. If 25 per cent are left with no intellectual or important physical sequelae and 10 per cent prove to be severely subnormal (using Lorber's estimates for spina bifida in the Medical Officer 19.4.68.) approximately 28 children per year will need specialized education either at ordinary schools or in special schools.

It would be of interest to follow up the total incidence of live births with spina bifida cystica in the West Riding with the subsequent mortality rate in order to compare the incidence with national and other local studies. There may also be true variations in various parts of the area - as occurs in South Wales. As the present figures are incomplete there is no evidence to support such a variation.