

NEW DOCTOR ASKS MORE NIXON TESTS

Seeks to Learn if Operation Is Necessary to Prevent Clotting Complications

By LAWRENCE K. ALTMAN
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LONG BEACH, Calif., Oct 27 —A new consulting surgeon recommended today that former President Richard M. Nixon undergo "further relatively sophisticated tests" to determine whether he needs an operation to prevent life-threatening complications from blood clots in his phlebitis-damaged left leg.

The additional tests were recommended by Dr. Wiley Barker, a professor of surgery at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. John C. Lungren, Mr. Nixon's physician, described Dr. Barker at a news conference as "a nationally known expert on venous system disease."

Dr. Lungren said the former President had agreed to undergo the tests during the next few days at Memorial Hospital Medical Center of Long Beach. Dr. Lungren unexpectedly readmitted Mr. Nixon to the hospital last Wednesday night in part because he said coumadin pills were not adequately thinning or anticoagulating the patient's blood.

Responds to Drug

Dr. Lungren said that with the addition of heparin injections in the hospital, Mr. Nixon "is again adequately anticoagulated at this time." He said that tests had shown that he was not, as was originally suspected, in the small category of patients who do not respond to coumadin. He said Mr. Nixon had followed "my prescribed regime faithfully."

Dr. Lungren said he hoped to treat Mr. Nixon with blood-thinning drugs and to avoid an operation. Nevertheless, he emphasized that "surgery is still a real possibility" if new clots form, if a runaway clot in his leg lodges in his lung as happened once before, or blood-thinning drugs again fail when Mr. Nixon goes home. But he added:

"We are not anxious to risk any [surgical] procedure if it is not going to help him."

Mr. Nixon, he said, "understands the seriousness of the situation" and "is not in any

undue pain." The specialist in internal medicine described his patient's mental status as "excellent."

The status of Mr. Nixon's health is a key factor in whether he can testify in the Watergate cover-up trial in Washington. Dr. Lungren declined to speculate on when Mr. Nixon will be able to testify.

No 'Political Exercise'

He said, "I will not let this [news conference] degenerate into a political exercise as to whether the former President will be able to testify either here or in Washington."

If surgery is not needed, Dr. Lungren said, he expects Mr. Nixon to return to La Casa Pacifica, his San Clemente estate, by the end of the week. But whatever the test results show, Mr. Nixon will require a close medical supervision for "many months," the doctor added.

Dr. Lungren and other members of the medical team caring for Mr. Nixon are hoping that the additional tests — repeat venogram and radioactive fibrinogen—will determine if the blood clots in the left leg are fresh and if there are any potentially lethal clots in the upper thigh and pelvis.

"There is additional information we and Dr. Barker need to make a decision about Mr. Nixon's care," Dr. Scott Driscoll, the radiologist who did a venogram on Mr. Nixon last week, said at the conference.

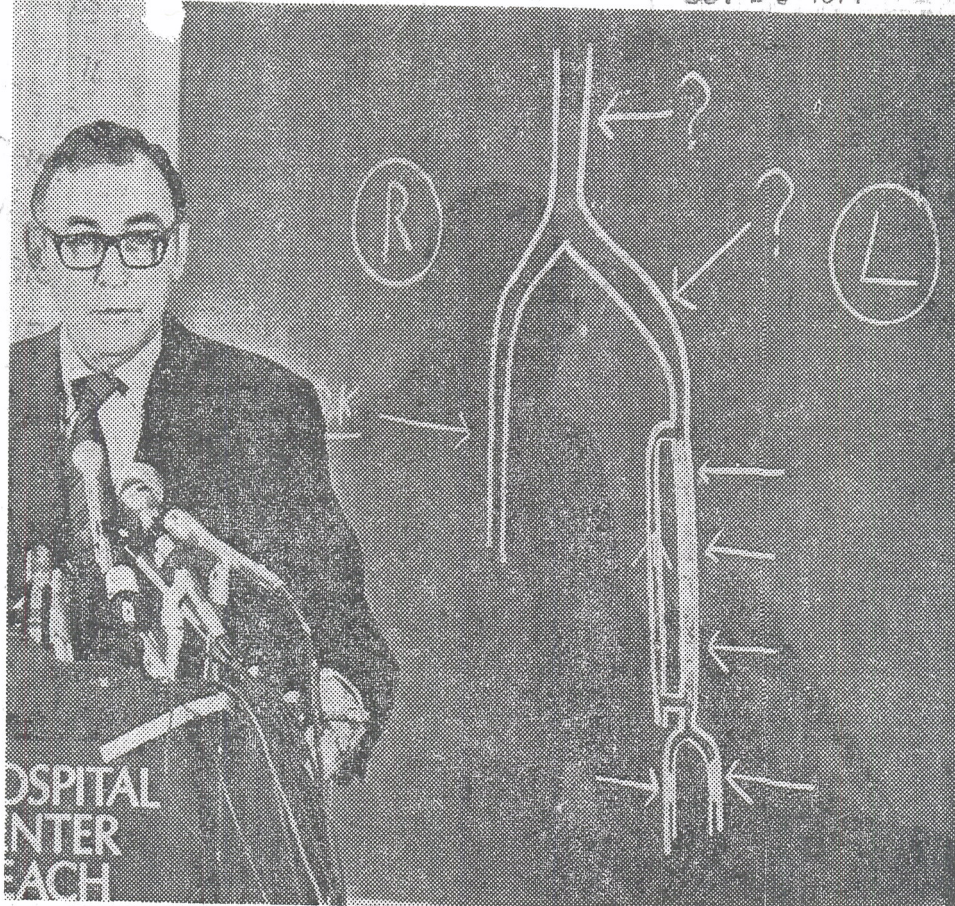
Dr. Barker was not present for the news conference. In a written statement, he said that Mr. Nixon's doctors were faced with several problems.

"First is that of controlling the clotting mechanisms," he said. "The second is to identify whether the symptoms in the leg now, which are minimal at this point, or at least minimal as long as he is what in bed with his feet up in the air, are due to the old clotting process and simple hemodynamic [blood flow] changes, or whether they are due to any new activity in the clotting process in the legs in spite of the anticoagulants."

"I think that the therapy that has been carried out has been carried as well as can be, but nonetheless we are still faced with these two problems."

After the results of the two tests are available, Dr. Barker said, "we will have a much clearer idea as to whether any surgery is indicated and how much activity Mr. Nixon will be allowed. Under any circumstances it is going to be necessary to be certain that he stays under close medical supervision for a protracted period of time, and by protracted period of time I mean for many months."

LUNGREN -
OVER



NIXON TO UNDERGO NEW TESTS: Dr. John C. Lungren reporting on his patient, Richard M. Nixon. Bottom of drawing shows clots in two veins of the left calf; farther up there is a massive clot in the thigh's femoral vein. In both cases, natural by-passes carry the blood through other veins. Question marks point to the inferior vena cava, at the top, and the iliac vein, targets of new tests. Details appear on Page 15.

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