

Mayo asks Lockheed to train its sights on a total medical information system

Is it possible to create a "total medical information system based on the computer?" The Mayo Clinic of Rochester, Minn., has asked the Lockheed Missiles & Space Div. of Lockheed Aircraft Corp. to find out. Lockheed will conduct a year-long study into the problem. The immediate object is to speed the flow of information and, wherever possible, to free doctors from time-consuming routine. Ultimately, the study could lead to the use of the computer in diagnosis, and a common computer language for recording medical histories.

Lockheed, which has been investigating the application of computers to medicine for the past 2½ years, considers this one of its major areas of future activity. "This is one of the largest studies of this type ever undertaken," says a spokesman.

Next week, 14 Lockheed engineers will begin working with 17 Mayo staffers on the system analysis and design phase of the project. One goal may be a system under which a patient could speak his own medical history into a computer, his doctor could add to it at later dates, and the history could be stored for such uses as scheduling laboratory tests and ordering drugs.

Mayo will seek outside funds for the study—reportedly more than \$500,000. The study will take three to five years to implement, says a Mayo spokesman.