A hormone obtained from horses apparently can prolong the lives of men stricken with heart attacks.

A University of Southern California physician says men treated with this hormone "are tending to survive about two to three times as long" as other male heart victims.

Although it is a female sex hormone, derived from pregnant mares, the medicine is given in such small doses it doesn't produce any feminizing effects among the patients, Dr. Jessie Marmorston said.

Good Effects Outweighed.

Female sex hormones have been used in the past to treat men who had heart attacks. But generally they had to be given in such large doses that their good was outweighed by undesirable side effects.

Dr. Marmorston presented her findings to a meeting of the American Federation of Clinical Research in Carmel, Calif., and elaborated on them in a telephone interview.

The doctor said the hormone preparation, named Premarin, has proved to be the only drug--other than blood-thinning anticoagulants--capable of cutting the death rate among men with heart attacks.

Two other female sex hormones, both made artificially, also were used in her study. But the doctor said they failed to prolong lives even though they lowered the amount of fat in the patients' blood.

Rises Cholesterol Question.

On the other hand, the Premarin pills had no effect on blood fats--yet seemed to keep more men alive longer.