

VITAL STATISTICS

474-Year-Old Family Record Analyzed by Chinese Student

Statistics Reveal Higher Mortality For Chinese Family Than That Given by Earliest Official English Life Table

VITAL STATISTICS of a Chinese family, faithfully kept for 474 years, have been subjected to statistical examination by a modern Chinese student, I-Chin Yuan, at the School of Hygiene and Public Health, the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. Mr. Yuan's results will be published in the forthcoming issue of *Human Biology*.

It has long been the custom in China, Mr. Yuan explains, to keep detailed accounts of births, marriages, length of life, etc., particularly of the men, in all Chinese families of any standing. Such a family account giving the vital statistics of a well-established household in the neighborhood of Canton was placed in his hands some time ago, and he has made a detailed statistical study of life-expectancies of this representative sample of the Chinese population, covering as it does nineteen generations, from the year 1365 to 1849.

Only children who lived to be more than fifteen years old are taken into account in these Chinese family records, so that Mr. Yuan's study was limited to this group in the whole population. In the 474 years recorded in the book he studied, there were 4,629 deaths. Age at death is recorded for 3,844, or 83 per cent.

In general it was found that at the younger ages the mortality rate was higher among the females than among the males but this relation was reversed when the older ages were considered. The only exception found was in the seventeenth century, which was a time of long and bloody wars in China. Then the death rate for males was high in the younger ages also, which of course is to be expected. The greater expectancy of life on the part of older women more than outbalances the high mortality among girls, so that taken as a whole the women of this group had markedly longer lives than the men.

Mr. Yuan compared his record with the earliest official English life table, and found that for the time covered the mortality rate for both men and women

was lower than that for Chinese as represented by the family he studied. Survivorship and expectation of life are correspondingly greater for the Occidental group.

"It is interesting," Mr. Yuan concludes, "to note that Farr's table shows several similar facts. The female mortality rates are higher than those of the male at the younger ages. The survivorship is more favorable for the female at the higher ages than for the male. The expectation of life of the female is greater at every age."

Science News Letter, June 13, 1931

PSYCHIATRY

Movies Used for First Time As Aid to Psycho-Analysis

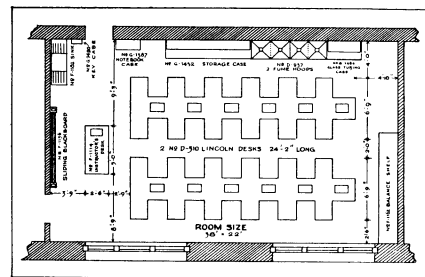
THE FIRST use of moving pictures as an aid to psycho-analysis in the study of personality disorders and retarded mental development was reported at the recent meeting of the American Association for the Study of the Feeble-minded in New York. Dr. L. Pierce Clark of Central Islip Hospital, New York City, presented a film of the dramatization by two of his patients of their problems, and discussed the role of this new psychiatric method.

In child analysis, Dr. Clark explained, the child dramatizes his problem. This is used as the basis for the interpretation of his difficulties. The play which the child acts is considered symbolic of his conflicts. It is thought that moving pictures used in this way will give the psychiatrist a better understanding of the nature and causes of mental arrest or feeble-mindedness.

"In presenting for the first time child analysis in dramatization by the motion picture," Dr. Clark said, "we hope to bring out the manner of behavior of certain neurotic children who symbolically act or reenact their conflicts in analytical sessions."

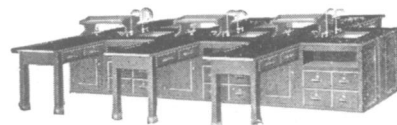
Science News Letter, June 13, 1931

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