

MEDICINE

Nitrogen Is Breathed In New Treatment for Mentally Ill

Gas Administration Is Easier Than Insulin Shock And Does Not Produce the Convulsions of Metrazol

MENTALLY sick patients are now being rescued from the world of the insane by the simple and comparatively safe measure of breathing nitrogen. "Encouraging results" of this new, non-shock treatment for insanity in a small series of cases were reported by Drs. H. E. Himwich, F. A. D. Alexander, Basile Lipetz and J. F. Fazekas, of Albany, N. Y., Medical College and Union University to the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, meeting in Toronto.

The new treatment achieves its effect by the same mechanism as the drastic insulin and metrazol shock treatments. This is by decreasing the metabolic activity of the brain. The nitrogen inhalation treatment, however, is easier to give than insulin shock and does not produce the fearful convulsions of metrazol treatments which are dreaded by both patients and physicians.

With the new treatment, patients breathe nitrogen long enough to deprive the brain of its oxygen supply for about five minutes. These treatments are given three times a week for a period of about three months.

Cutting down the oxygen supply to the brain reduces its metabolic activity. Metrazol does the same thing by temporarily arresting breathing movements. Insulin shock does it by depleting the sugar supply to the brain, without which the brain cannot use oxygen.

The fact that metrazol and insulin shock treatments both produced this effect of decreased metabolic activity was discovered a year ago by a University of Toronto research team under the leadership of Sir Frederick Banting and Dr. G. Edward Hall. At that time Dr. Hall predicted that neither insulin nor metrazol would be the last word in treatment of schizophrenia and that a bet-

ter and less severe remedy would be found to replace them. The nitrogen inhalation treatment seems now to be that remedy.

Insulin Sobers Alcoholic

DRUNKS, not ordinary ones but those who were completely "out" in serious alcoholic coma, were sobered up in two hours or less and able to walk alone within four hours by injection of sugar and the diabetes remedy, insulin, Drs. Walter Goldfarb, Karl M. Bowman and Samuel Parker of Bellevue and King's County Hospitals, New York, reported.

This sobering-up treatment works for any intoxicated person, Dr. Goldfarb said, but the results are most startling in cases of acute alcoholism. Although he and his associates have tried it on persons not acutely intoxicated, it is only being used for serious cases where there is danger of the patient dying or being very ill for a long time. The ordinary drunk, Dr. Goldfarb pointed out, will recover without any treatment. But this insulin-sugar treatment can be given by any physician in his office or the patient's home; it is not dangerous, and there is no reason, Dr. Goldfarb said, why it should not be given to any intoxicated person.

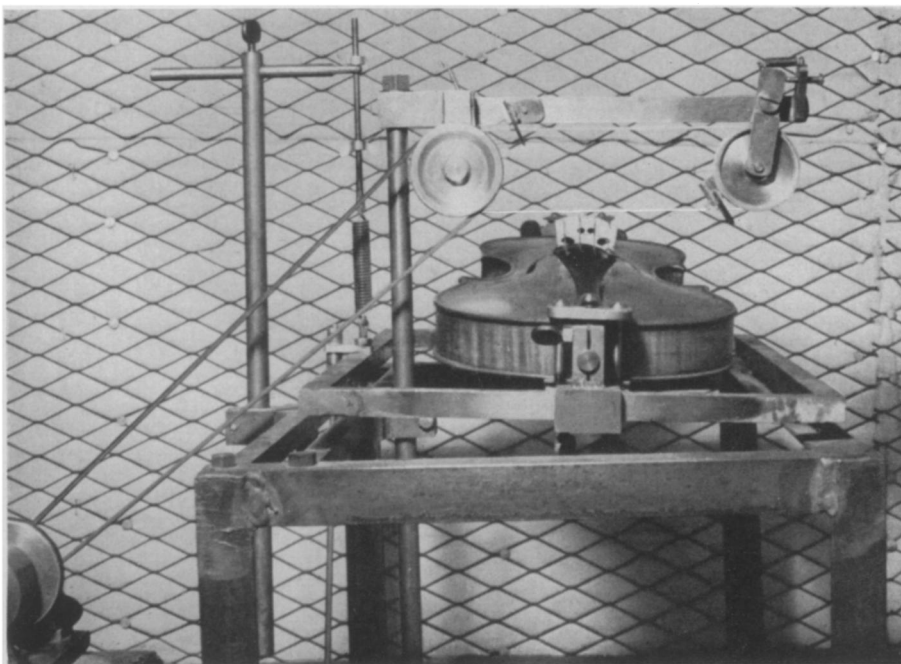
Insulin alone had no effect, the New York investigators reported, and sugar alone only helped in cases of severe intoxication where the amount of alcohol in the blood was over 300 milligrams per cent. Burning of alcohol and its consequent disappearance from the body, it was suggested, may be speeded by catalytic action of simultaneous oxidation or burning of sugar.

Reduce To Avoid Diabetes

AVOID eating many fat foods to avoid getting diabetes may be the advice doctors will give in the future as a result of research reported by Drs. Reginald E. Haist and Jessie Ridout and Prof. C. H. Best of the University of Toronto.

Doctors are already advising people to avoid overweight as a precaution against diabetes because overweight persons are known to be more likely to develop the ailment. The reducing diet for prevention of diabetes, if advised on the basis of the research reported, would cut down fat foods more than sweet and starchy foods.

Diets very rich in fats markedly reduced the insulin content of the pan-



MUSIC WITHOUT MUSICIAN

This mechanically played violin was described before the National Academy of Sciences by Dr. C. E. Seashore, of the University of Iowa. The mute, he found, although made of many materials, depends for its effect upon weight alone.