

## MEDICINE

# High Frequency Currents New Aid in Cataract Removal

## Artificial Ripening Makes Removal Easier and More Certain; Fever Treatments Found Successful

**A**RTIFICIAL ripening of cataracts of the eye, making their removal easier and more certain, can be safely achieved with the aid of high frequency electric currents, Dr. Albert L. Brown of Cincinnati reported at the American Congress of Physical Therapy in New York City.

The heat due to resistance of the tissues to the high frequency currents apparently toughens the capsule, Dr. Brown explained, and if the capsule should rupture during the operation, the surgeon still has the advantage of extracting a mature cataract.

This new development promises to aid cataract removal, but Dr. Brown emphasized caution until the value of the procedure has been well established.

### Fever Machine Better

**P**ATIENTS with the mental disease, parietic dementia, tragic sequel of syphilis, stand a much better chance of recovery when given fever treatments by machine instead of by malaria germs.

The percentage of patients who get well is about 20% greater after a full treatment of the machine-induced fever combined with medicine than from malaria inoculation, Dr. A. E. Bennett, of Omaha, Nebr., reported. His figures were based on a review of five years' experience with the combined artificial fever and medical treatment at the University of Nebraska College of Medicine and Hastings, Nebr., State Hospital. Drs. Juul C. Nielsen of Hastings, A. H. Fechner of Lincoln and Paul T. Cash of Omaha assisted in the survey.

Until the Viennese physician, Wagner Jauregg, introduced the malaria treatment of this ailment, results of treating the disease were unsatisfactory, Dr. Bennett pointed out. The malaria treatment consists in injecting malaria germs, which produce a high fever that in many cases restores the patient to sanity. In the last 10 years, other methods of inducing high fever, such as the fever machines that make use of short radio waves, have been introduced.

The advantage of these methods over malaria-induced fever is that the fever can be controlled, whereas in malarial fever the patient may either not get enough or may get more than he can withstand. The latter is a danger particularly in the case of elderly patients or those with high blood pressure, or inflammation of the aorta, the big artery leading from the heart.

### Arthritis Helped

**T**HIS same kind of artificial fever treatment has been tried in patients suffering from atrophic arthritis. The treatment relieves but does not cure the arthritis, according to a report by Drs. Walter M. Solomon and Robert M. Stecher of Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Out of a group of 114 patients, most of whom had suffered with severe arthritis for many years, 75% noticed substantial relief from pain and stiffness lasting for from several days to several weeks. "Not a single patient seems to have been cured as a result of fever therapy nor was the disease substantially arrested," the Cleveland doctors reported. "As treatments were continued, the period of relief was prolonged so that the interval between treatments could be lengthened without deleterious effects."

Since the specific nature of the disease is not known, all doctors can do is to relieve symptoms of the arthritis, and this relief, Drs. Solomon and Stecher suggest, apparently can be given to a large proportion of patients by artificial fever treatments.

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## PSYCHIATRY

### Physicians Urged to Avoid Idea of "Legal Insanity"

**A**S ILLOGICAL as the dual standard for sex morality, and clung to as tenaciously, is the dual conception of insanity—legal insanity and medical insanity."

Medical men and legal experts alike

## ● RADIO

Dr. Abel Wolman, of the Johns Hopkins University, chief engineer of the Maryland State Health Department, will be the guest scientist on "Adventures in Science" with Miss Jane Stafford, of Science Service, over the coast to coast network of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Monday, October 16, 4:30 p.m., EST, 3:30 CST, 2:30 MST, 1:30 PST. Listen in on your local station. Listen in each Monday.

deplore the "battle of experts" that too often occurs when a criminal claims innocence by reason of insanity. Yet again and again physicians are called upon to answer the question "Is he *legally* insane?"

Physicians know that a man cannot be insane medically and sane legally any more than he can have tuberculosis medically but be sound legally. Such a distinction recalls the Mikado's Poobah who had a different opinion for each of the many offices he held.

"Did the defendant know the nature and quality of the act and if he did, did he know that it was wrong?" This question is put over and over to physician witnesses. Physicians do not make diagnoses in such terms.

Physicians called into court as expert witnesses are urged to stick to their medicine and leave legal quibbles to lawyers, in a communication to the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* prepared by Dr. Gregory Zilboorg, New York psychiatrist.

"The question of responsibility we shall discard without qualms," he said. "This is not a medical question. As psychiatrists we have thoughts of our own on the subject; if insanity is a disease and the law itself considers insanity a disease, we think that man is no more responsible for his mental disease than for his gastric ulcer or brain tumor. But these views are of no import to the Court for, according to the law, not we doctors but the jury is the sole judge of the defendant's responsibility and if we are

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