

NUTRITION

Vitamin Notion Debunked

The idea that normal, healthy people acquire more "pep" and energy and gain weight by taking vitamin pills or supplements not borne out.

► THE IDEA that apparently normal, healthy persons eating the usual American diet would acquire better appetites and more "pep" and energy and gain weight by taking vitamin pills or supplements is debunked in a report by Dr. Julian M. Ruffin and Dr. David Cayer, of Duke University (*Journal, American Medical Association*, Nov. 25).

Their study was conducted at the request of the Office of the Quartermaster General, U. S. Army. It was made on a group of 200 volunteer medical students and technicians. These were divided into five groups. For a period of 30 days, one group took G. I. vitamin tablets and liver extract tablets, another yeast extract tablets and the vitamin pills, a third the vitamin pills and a sugar pill made to look just like the others, a fourth vitamin pills only, and the fifth the sugar pills only.

The test was run for 30 days because that period is found sufficient for recovery under vitamin treatment of patients frankly sick from lack of vitamins.

None of the volunteers knew what was in the pills they were taking. Each kept a daily record of weight, his impressions of any effect on appetite, "pep" and energy, and of such symptoms as "gas" or indigestion, nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea.

"A significant increase in diarrhea and a highly significant increase in abdominal pain and in nausea and vomiting occurred in those groups receiving liver extract and yeast," the physicians report.

"No significant increase was noted in appetite, energy and 'pep,' 'gas' and indigestion, general health or weight among the various groups."

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PSYCHOLOGY

Facts on Disputed Book

Claims made in the controversial *Races of Mankind* are substantially correct but do not tell the whole story, it is indicated.

► CLAIMS MADE in the controversial book *Races of Mankind*, which the Army withheld from sending to men overseas, are substantially correct but do not tell the whole story, a report to the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* by Dr. Thelma G. Alper and Prof. Edwin G. Boring of Harvard University indicates.

Prof. Boring is author of the original 1919 report of intelligence scores of the First World War draft from which the authors of *Races of Mankind* took the figures indicating superiority of northern Negroes to southern whites that stirred so much adverse criticism. He was then a captain in the Army.

Dr. Ruth Benedict and Dr. Gene Weltfish did base their assertion on results from only a few states, these psychologists find, and they strengthened their case by omitting the northern state in

which Negroes averaged lowest and the southern state in which the whites averaged highest.

"That was fair enough," the psychologists comment, however, "since they wanted to show that the difference usually found can be reversed when extreme instances are selected."

Here are the figures when all states and both the Alpha and Beta (for illiterates and non-English-speaking persons) examinations are included. The figures are "not wholly unlike mental ages."

Southern Negro 9.8; southern white 12.7; northern Negro 12.0; northern white 14.1.

Including the Beta scores did not give any advantage to the Negroes, Prof. Boring and Dr. Alper state. Although this test required no knowledge of reading and writing and even the directions for taking the test were given by gesture



OUTDOOR SPOTWELDING—
It is now possible to weld airplane engines on the spot, saving valuable hours. A portable spotwelder was assembled at the Glenn L. Martin Co. to do this job.

rather than words, high scores on it apparently required a good deal of sophistication. While including Beta scores in the average helps the Negro average, it raises that of the white more.

"It was a disadvantage in the Army tests of 1918," the investigators conclude, "for a white or a Negro to come from a southern state where education and economic opportunities are few instead of from a northern state where they are better, and also a disadvantage, whether northern or southern, to be Negro and not white. Thus the average score for the southern Negroes is lowest of the four because southern Negroes work against both disadvantages, and the average score for the northern whites is, conversely, highest of all. Benedict and Weltfish might have avoided the criticism of selection of states had they given all four of these averages instead of only two, for then they would have avoided the false implication that skin color made no difference in the states under consideration."

The Army psychologists of 1919, the report points out, were not ready to draw any conclusions at all about the relative intelligence of the recruits from different states—there were too many unknown factors operating in the selection of the men tested.

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