

PSYCHOLOGY

Phobias Keep Some Single

► ONE OUT OF THREE American does not marry.

The reason is often unconscious phobias about marriage, reports Dr. Jacob H. Friedman, director of the neuropsychiatric service of Fordham Hospital and chief of the Mental Hygiene Clinic at Lebanon Hospital.

Most of the people who are kept away from the trip to the altar by phobias do not know the real cause of their remaining single, Dr. Friedman explains in the *Journal of Hillside Hospital* (Dec.).

They fool themselves with all sorts of "reasons" which may appear valid to strangers and to the single individual himself, but are actually what the psychiatrist calls "rationalizations."

Reasons men give include that marriage entails too much responsibility; marriage means loss of liberty; deceived by one woman, they feel "all women are no good"; all women are like mothers; women are promiscuous and untrustworthy; marriage is too much of a gamble as shown by the divorce rate; married women are too demanding; too high standards in seeking a wife; fear of inheritance of mental illness.

Women also give false reasons for their

unconscious fears. Their reasons include fear of pregnancy; fear of inheritance of mental illness; parental attachment; fear of infidelity of future husband; guilt in relation to childhood sexual activity; fear of marital relations; fear of future husband possessing the undesirable traits of father or brother; jilted by one man, they think "all men are no good"; desire for a wealthy husband.

Dr. Friedman told of one young man, a patient who was referred for advice after he had failed his bar examination five times.

Dr. Friedman found the repeated failures were due to an unconscious need to keep himself poor and financially unable to marry. The young man came from a family opposed to marriage. His mother had died when he was 14 and his father never married again. He was reared by a spinster aunt and his uncles and aunts all remained single. He was one of five brothers and sisters, none of whom was married.

After a year of treatment, the patient began to associate with eligible girls. His symptoms vanished and later he married happily.

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The end result is laying down a network of collagen, tough material that binds scar tissue together. The wound edges begin to gain in tensile strength, first evidence of healing, only after collagen is formed.

Dr. Dunnington showed the importance of early repair work by placing chemicals in wounds at different intervals after injury. Chemicals halted healing processes when applied early, but have no effect later in repair. He also found several drugs retard wound healing, but none was found that will accelerate it.

Still unknown is what triggers the early phase of healing. This is probably release of enzymes that break down protein into building blocks of new connective, or scar tissue.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Common Origin for Race Riots, Fashion Changes

► CHANGES in fashion, race riots, religious revivals, even wars and stock market crashes with economic depressions have a common origin.

They are all forms of mental epidemics, Dr. F. Kraupl Taylor of Maudsley Hospital, Denmark Hill, London, England, reported to the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

They arise when emotions, relatively harmless in an individual, are shared, although at first not expressed, by large numbers in a community. The susceptible population is like a volcano, ready to erupt when incited by an idea that lets them vent in company their otherwise suppressed common emotion.

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MEDICINE

Hospitals Are Too Noisy For Good Heart Diagnosis

► FAINT HEART MURMERS that may be early signs of serious heart disease are going unnoticed in noisy hospitals, Dr. Dale Groom of the Medical College of South Carolina, Charleston, S. C., told the American Medical Association clinical meeting in Seattle.

In an experiment to see just how noisy a modern hospital is, Dr. Groom found that the heart clinic office, examining rooms and the library were not much quieter than the hospital's boiler room.

The experiment was done, he said, as a study in hearing the faint heart murmurs that may be masked by a high level of background noise. He found that the noise level inside a DC-6 airliner was 105 decibels while the noise level in the clinic examining rooms ranged from 72 to 75 decibels.

Dr. Groom said that heart murmurs may help the physician discover diseases of the heart valves many years before the heart enlarges or fails. It can make a big difference in outlook and treatment.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Arthritis and Fluoridation

► DRINKING FLUORIDATED WATER will not cause arthritis, Dr. Charles Leroy Steinberg, Rochester General Hospital, Rochester, N. Y., told the annual interim scientific session of the American Rheumatism Association meeting in Bethesda, Md.

Dr. Steinberg reported on a two-year study of the fluoride content of the bones and joints of arthritic patients who had been drinking fluoridated water for many years.

Some of them were in their 70's and 80's. The amounts of fluorine found in those arthritics tested were normal, he said.

"Our study should dispel the fear that fluoridation of water as recommended by health authorities is a factor in the cause of arthritic conditions," he said.

There is enough evidence, Dr. Steinberg said, to confirm the fact that fluoridated drinking water will prevent tooth decay when the water contains one part per million of fluoride, and when the water is used by children from birth up to 12 years of age.

"Our studies were concerned with the possible ill effects that fluoridation may have on the adult and upon mankind in general," he said, "for it is known that in large quantities, in excess of five parts per million in drinking water, fluoride may have some detrimental effect upon bone and ligaments."

Dr. Steinberg and his team of researchers studied the tissues of the ribs, vertebrae and

joints of patients with arthritis. Normal amounts of fluoride were found in ribs and joints, he said, and slightly less than normal amounts were found in vertebrae.

The study was conducted at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, Rochester, N. Y. Joint authors of the report were Drs. Dwight E. Gardner, Frank A. Smith and Harold C. Hodge of the division of pharmacology and toxicology, University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry.

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BIOCHEMISTRY

Wound Healing Begins As Soon as Damage Done

► NATURE begins healing wounds immediately after they occur. The period of inactivity of tissue following infliction of the wound, long postulated by scientists, apparently does not occur.

This was reported by Dr. John H. Dunnington, Columbia University eye surgeon, at the University of California annual proctor lecture in ophthalmology.

Dr. Dunnington described animal experiments which were some of the first tracings of healing of eye wounds. They show the body begins repair work immediately with chemical reactions similar to those seen recently in other organs.