

PSYCHOLOGY

Child, Adult Addictions

► CHILDREN who eat lead-containing paint and other substance do so for some of the same reasons that cause adults to become alcohol or narcotic addicts, Dr. Frances Millican, department of psychiatry at Children's Hospital, Washington, D. C., reported to the American Academy of Pediatrics meeting in the nation's capital.

She studied 31 children with bizarre appetites for inedible substances, a habit known medically as pica.

Pica takes on many forms, of which lead poisoning is only one example, Dr. Millican said. Merely keeping the child away from lead-containing paints and other substances is not completely effective. It does not get at the underlying reason of why the child shows this type of behavior. Children who are stopped forcibly from eating harmful substances may develop other symptoms such as skin eruptions.

Commenting on the research, Dr. Reginald Lourie, chief of the hospital's psychiatry department, which carried on the study, said that the main problem with pica children can be traced to the mother-child relationship.

Passive and dependent mothers and those who cannot deny their child anything are frequently responsible, he reported.

Pica is not necessarily the same addiction that is seen in adults but it has many of the same elements. Studies of adult addicts always showed that the roots of the problem are in childhood, he said.

The study will be expanded to learn exactly how childhood pica and adult addiction are related, Dr. Lourie reported. He

hopes to enlist the aid of outside agencies to study the history of adult addicts and see if they showed signs of pica during childhood.

Associated with Drs. Millican and Lourie in the research were Drs. Emma Layman and Barbara Sokoloff, and Lilly Y. Takahashi.

Science News Letter, April 13, 1957

MEDICINE

Sex Views Blamed For Early Pregnancies

► OUR DISTORTED sex perspective should be corrected by parents, citizens and physicians, Dr. Goodrich C. Schaffer, a Portland, Ore., gynecologist, reported to physicians attending the American Academy of General Practice meeting in St. Louis, Mo.

Today's young girls, as a group, are deeply confused and disturbed. They suddenly find themselves facing the whole tree of sex knowledge without having first been exposed to the tips of the roots, he said.

As a result they climb the tree of knowledge eagerly, but they cannot distinguish the rotten branches, Dr. Schaffer added.

The purely obstetrical outlook of a 13-year-old girl is good. The other aspects of what Dr. Schaffer termed "precocious pregnancies" are not, he said. Children of that age are not intellectually or socially conditioned to childbearing or child care. With rare exceptions, the total picture too often ranges from pathetic to tragic, he reported.

Delinquent parents or educators are not entirely responsible for the situation. Instead, it is the result of the current and almost insane sex preoccupation, he added.

The gynecologist urged early, frequent, and thorough examinations by physicians, and every effort to maintain a physically and psychologically healthy status.

Science News Letter, April 13, 1957

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by A. H. Russell

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Questions

BACTERIOLOGY—What kind of bacteria produce colominic acid? p. 230.

CHEMISTRY—What is the name given the new group of metal and vinyl compounds? p. 230.

GEOPHYSICS—What are the four different coatings that will go over the gold plating of the proposed earth satellites? p. 226.

HORTICULTURE—How long will Easter lilies stay in bloom? p. 234.

PHYSICS—What is the name of the machine the AEC plans to build to conduct research in thermonuclear reactions? p. 227.

PSYCHOLOGY—What is one of the strange substances children sometimes eat? p. 238.

TECHNOLOGY—What everyday substance can now be used to replace quartz as a light polarizing part of microscopes? p. 233.

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BIOLOGY

Baboons Join Fight Against Heart Disease

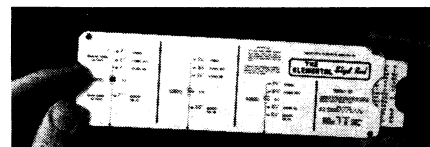
► THE MONKEY is getting a new partner to share his job in scientific research, his "big brother" the baboon.

The arrival of the first six baboons for a proposed colony of 300 of the large animals was reported by the Southwest Foundation for Research and Education, San Antonio, Tex. They will be used for studies on heart disease and will be made available to other research institutions.

The importance of baboons for heart research was indicated by the recent discovery that a baboon in the New Orleans zoo had died with a condition resembling hardening of the arteries in humans. This is the first animal that "naturally" developed the disease, the foundation reported.

Science News Letter, April 13, 1957

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