

Art of Argument

By Giles St. Aubyn

Here is a clear, simply written basic guide to logical thinking, showing how to spot the fallacies, the prejudices and emotionalism, the inappropriate analogies, etc., in the other fellow's argument and how to watch for and avoid the irrational in your own judgments. The author makes plain not only *how* but also *why* people resist facing the truth.

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MEDICINE

Doctors Are Reading—

► THE PATIENT may not be able to tell the doctor where "it hurts" but a Boston psychiatrist has come up with a kind of lie-detector test that proves whether or not pain is just in the mind.

Physicians will be reading in the Journal of the American Medical Association that the test is based on one of the impulses recorded in lie-detector tests, psychogalvanic reflex, 181:855, 1962. Dr. Leo Alexander of Tufts University School of Medicine and Boston State Hospital said the test is not intended to replace thorough examination but to help in what is often a difficult diagnosis.

In physical pain the electrical resistance of the skin is strikingly different from the fluctuations noted in mental or psychogenic pain, Dr. Alexander found in tests on groups of 20 and 14 patients.

Cleaning Fluid Danger

The danger of inhaling the fumes of carbon tetrachloride is made worse when a person is drinking alcoholic beverages. In the short time it took to clean spots of alcohol off clothes soiled at a cocktail party, two patients suffered acute kidney failure.

Drs. Peter S. New, Glenn D. Lubash, Lawrence Scherr and Albert L. Rubin, all formerly of Cornell Medical Center, New York, reported 19 such cases from exposure to the cleaning fluid since 1955 (p. 903).

Carbon tetrachloride is believed by some investigators to combine with alcohol to produce ethylchloroformate, a chemical possibly harmful to the kidneys. Experimental evidence that chronic alcoholism produces susceptible kidneys in animals may indicate a predisposing factor in man.

Psychiatry at College

Short-term psychotherapy is especially suited to college students. This type of person is intelligent, wants to change and is capable of changing, Dr. Dana L. Farnsworth, director of Harvard University's health services, Cambridge, Mass., said (p. 815).

GENERAL SCIENCE

News From Science Clubs

► MANY CLUBS affiliated with Science Clubs of America publish, weekly or monthly, a science bulletin for club members and/or other students in their school. Your club may want to exchange publications with other groups. Some of these clubs and their publications are listed below.

ECHOHEARS NEWSLETTER by Echohears Science Club, Atlantic Junior High School, North Quincy, Mass.

MOUNT SI MATHEMATICS CLUB NEWSLETTER by the Mathematics Club, Mount Si High School, Snoqualmie, Wash.

EXPERIMENTER by Onaway High

If a student drops out of college, Dr. Farnsworth advised, he should stay out for at least a year, a period long enough for him to make some significant achievement and work out the problems that caused his withdrawal. The drop-out rate in American colleges averages about 50%. Probably about 10% each year who remain in school need professional help in emotional problems.

Water Retention

Ten to 20 pounds of water may be retained by a human before there is any sign of swelling, Dr. S. K. Fineberg of Harlem Hospital, New York, said (p. 862). A far greater number of women than men have this condition.

This "may be the greatest single cause of failure in the treatment of obesity," he explained.

Reason for Abortion

A hereditary disease in which death may not occur until a person is in his thirties or forties was termed a reason for "therapeutic abortion," the American Medical Association questions and answers section indicated (p. 928). A 29-year-old pregnant woman with two children who are normal so far, with a history of a severe type of St. Vitus Dance called Huntington chorea, will have to decide with her husband whether to risk the disease skipping a generation. Even then, children may transmit it to succeeding generations.

Plastic Utensils

Ordinary cooking with Teflon-coated utensils will not produce poisonous fumes from the plastic coat, the Journal stated in response to another question (p. 930). However, if Teflon were subjected to temperatures greater than 644 degrees Fahrenheit, "polymer fume fever," resembling influenza and lasting 36 to 48 hours, could result.

• Science News Letter, 82:190 September 22, 1962

School Science Club, Onaway, Mich.

SCIENCE CLUB NEWS by Oak Ridge High School, 6000 S. Wingard Ave., Orlando, Fla.

CONTRAILS by Science Club, Central High School, 317 W. Washington Ave., South Bend, Ind.

Science articles and news of club activities are written by members of science clubs for many school papers.

Send reports on your activities to Science Clubs of America, 1717 N Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

• Science News Letter, 82:190 September 22, 1962