

PSYCHOLOGY

Alcoholism Hard to Face

Before an alcoholic can be treated for his condition, he must overcome the "help barrier" by admitting he is unable to control his drinking.

► ONE OF THE TOUGHEST problems in treating the alcoholic is to get him to admit he has a drinking problem and to seek help, a psychologist told the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in Los Angeles.

The alcoholic who does seek help admits that he is incapable of controlling his drinking and this makes him think he is inferior to others, said Dr. John O. Grimm, Veterans' Administration Hospital, Salt Lake City, Utah. The reluctance an alcoholic has in facing up to his condition Dr. Grimm calls the help barrier.

"To deny that he has a problem with alcohol is to cling to the last infantile wish that he can control his drinking," Dr. Grimm explained.

Dr. Grimm said the surrender must be repeated many times. An alcoholic will hit bottom, develop humility and surrender to others and seek treatment, but he will bounce back to his defiant self at a later time. It is therefore important that alcoholics should not be released from treatment too early, he said.

A second common feature of the alco-

holic's personality is the superman urge, he said. Recovering alcoholics appear to strive for perfection to make up for their past behavior. They set goals so high they cannot reach them.

Dr. Grimm said a third common feature of the alcoholic is that when he is recovering, he tends to see life and people through "a long dark tunnel with a small peep hole in the end." He sees in life only those things he wants to see. This results in poor judgment and adds to his feeling of frustration and failure.

A fourth common trait in the alcoholic's personality is that he chooses to make decisions on a black-white basis, Dr. Grimm said. The inability of the alcoholic to allow for degrees of choice leads to failures in solving problems. He therefore loses confidence in himself, becoming supersensitive to criticism and impulsive toward authority.

Although many alcoholics seem to be the "life of the party," another common feature of persons with this affliction is loneliness. Symptoms of this loneliness are depression, hopelessness, boredom and apathy.

Dr. Grimm said that while these traits are common to alcoholism, they are not restricted to this disease.

• Science News Letter, 86:183 Sept. 19, 1964

Trainee Prediction Hard

► PREDICTING how Peace Corps trainees will get along on the job is just about as successful as forecasting college achievement, a psychologist told the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in Los Angeles.

Dr. George M. Guthrie, Pennsylvania State University, said despite all testing, little correlation could be found between what Peace Corps trainees were predicted to do and what they did.

In a program to train college students for teaching posts in the Philippines, Dr. Guthrie said he developed models of American performance that would likely be successful on the Islands.

The situation seemed to require persons who were sensitive to others' feelings, patient, soft-spoken and "service-oriented," but not reformers.

However, despite tests, faculty ratings, ratings by Filipino consultants and approval by a final selection board whose members had all available information on the likelihood of success for each person in the group, predictions did not compare well with how the trainees actually get along in the Philippines.

Assisting Dr. Guthrie in his program was Dr. Margaret S. McKendry, also of Pennsylvania State University.

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Thyroid-Emotion Link

► PERSONS suffering from thyroid deficiency, or hypothyroidism, can easily be mistaken for neurotics, a psychologist told the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in Los Angeles.

Dr. Martha Schon, neuropsychiatric service, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, said that a study she conducted of 24 thyroid deficiency patients showed them to be fatigued, irritable and nervous before treatment. They were also emotionally explosive and displayed physical symptoms, like speech difficulties and muscular pain, she said.

After these persons were given thyroid products, however, most of their symptoms either lessened or disappeared.

Dr. Schon said persons with hypothyroid problems, unlike neurotics, assume responsibility for their emotional reactions. Neurotics usually blame those around them or circumstances for their difficulties.

The study indicated that thyroid hormones have the ability to balance emotions. Dr. Schon believes, therefore, that these hormones can aid in the treatment of mental disorders.

The study also indicated that pituitary hormones alone are not responsible for personality development. Rather, it appears that pituitary hormones are concerned more with the shaping of personality in their effect on thyroid production.

Dr. Schon said her findings lead her to believe that hypothyroidism not caused by surgical removal is brought on by mental pressures that a person is unable to cope with.

The study was supported in part by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health, Bethesda, Md.

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OCEANOGRAPHY

Unusually Salty Water At Red Sea Bottom

► POCKETS of abnormally warm and salty water have been found at the bottom of the Red Sea.

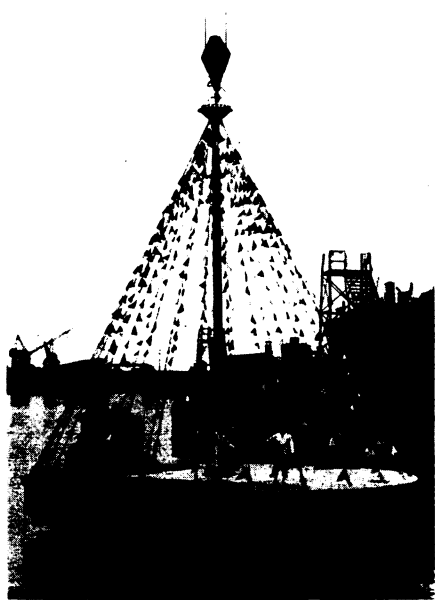
These pockets contain water whose temperature is about 78 degrees Fahrenheit and whose salt content is in the region of 43 to 44 parts per thousand. Normal temperatures and salinity in the Red Sea run about 72 degrees and 40.7 parts per thousand.

The observations, which were made both by the U.S. ships Atlantis and Atlantis II, and the British vessel Discovery, were all in the region of 21 degrees, 15 minutes north and 38 degrees, 05 minutes east. They were made in water 6,400 feet or more deep, within 150 feet of the bottom.

Scientists are not sure of the source of this warm, salty water, although they think it may be coming from some landlocked basin.

The observations were reported by Arthur R. Miller of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, Mass., and H. Charnock of the British National Institute of Oceanography in Nature, 203:590, 1964.

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General Dynamics Corp.

TELEMETERING BUOY — Prototype oceanographic buoy, capable of relaying scientific data to shore stations 3,000 miles away, is launched by the U.S. Navy in Jacksonville, Fla. The buoy was designed for the Office of Naval Research by the Convair Division of General Dynamics in San Diego, Calif.