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PSYCHIATRY

No Simple Prescription For Treating Anxiety

► NO STEREOTYPED prescription for "treating anxiety" can cover even a portion of the complexities this concept involves, a noted psychiatrist told the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis meeting in New York.

Dr. Jules H. Masserman, professor and co-chairman of the department of neurology and psychiatry, Northwestern University Medical School, Chicago, pointed out that the alleviation of anxiety is an integral part of all psychiatric therapy.

Today, he said, psychiatric therapy to relieve a patient's anxiety symptoms involves medical treatment as well as the use of psychological techniques.

Psychiatrists will try to help an individual realize that "his previously neurotic patterns of behavior, although perhaps once suitable, are no longer either necessary or advantageous, whereas more effective, creative and culturally adaptive modes of conduct will be found to be on the whole more pleasurable, profitable, and in no sense stultifying to uniqueness or individuality."

After an examination of the many concepts covered by the term "anxiety," Dr. Masserman concluded that anxiety is now considered as "narcissistic fear of a physically, socially or cosmically unknown, unaccustomed, unpredictable and possibly uncontrollable universe."

He noted that anxiety produces a state of tension "ranging from unpleasant to unbearable, which induces a patient to seek professional aid."

However, although analysis may provide a partial answer, the Northwestern psychiatrist emphasized that the biological, personal, social and psychological dimensions of anxiety make any simple solution impossible.

• Science News Letter, 87:226 April 10, 1965

PSYCHIATRY

Drug Suicides Mount In Great Britain

► DRUG-TAKING in Britain shows increased dependency on barbiturates each year and a corresponding increase in drug suicides.

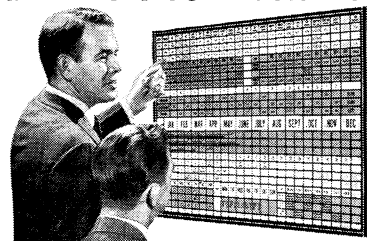
Thousands more patients are now having barbiturates prescribed for increasing cases of insomnia, depression and emotional disturbances. The number of suicides from barbiturate poisoning increased in England and Wales from 787 in 1961 to 1,083 in 1962, the latest year for which complete figures are available.

These were the findings of Dr. M. M. Glatt, an eminent psychiatrist, and Eileen Brooke, a General Register Office statistician.

Their report said, "Despite the constant warnings in the medical press of the dangers of addiction, the consumption of the drugs and with it the ever-increasing numbers of suicides, both actual and attempted, and of fatal accidents, continues unabated."

• Science News Letter, 87:226 April 10, 1965

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