

PSYCHOLOGY

Firstborns More Anxious

New evidence supports the theory that firstborn children are less sure about how they really feel and are more influenced by others' moods than are their younger siblings.

► ONE MORE PROP has been thrown under the free-floating "birth order" psychology.

A new study, conducted at the University of Connecticut, lends evidence to the theory that firstborn children are less sure about how they really feel than are their younger brothers and sisters.

Furthermore, the firstborn is more influenced emotionally by the moods of others and tends to alter his state of mind accordingly, says the study.

To collect their data on birth order, psychologists Kenneth Ring, C. E. Lipinski and Dorothea Braginsky tested 65 college women, half firstborns and half later borns.

Each woman was placed in a room with two other persons called stooges. The stooges had been trained and instructed to act out different degrees of anxiety in four separate test situations.

Each woman subject was asked to rate her state of mind on an anxiety-calm scale and to answer a second questionnaire on her confidence in that rating.

When the experimenter left the room,

the stooges began acting anxious about the experiment. (The subject had been misled on its purpose.) In some situations the stooges were equally anxious, in others they were not.

With one stooge highly upset and the other only moderately disturbed, it was found that women born first tended to be far less sure about the state of their own emotions than were later borns who seemed to be unaffected in their own self-evaluation.

The theory that first children will be influenced by other people to a greater extent than later children was also supported by the experiment. First born women moved toward the level of emotion acted out by the stooges. Moreover, none of them was calm during the experiment, while 43% of the later borns rated themselves that way.

The psychologists conclude that firstborn children react more strongly to an anxiety producing situation. One explanation offered is that children second in line have less help from parents in handling anxiety and therefore work out a better system.

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GENERAL SCIENCE

Primate Colony Dedicated

See Front Cover

► RESEARCH ON PRIMATES is becoming essential to today's science and future mankind, it was pointed out at the dedication of the new Yerkes Regional Primate Research Center, on the Emory University campus in Atlanta, Ga.

The new center has what is considered the most valuable collection of non-human primates anywhere in the world as well as the largest gorilla collection and the largest captive orangutan colony. Carefully tended in meticulously clean and well-equipped laboratories, nursery rooms and play rooms are 15 gorillas, 27 orangutans, 66 chimpanzees and some 200 monkeys of more than 15 different varieties. One of the chimps, Atlanta, the first to be born in the new quarters, is shown on this week's front cover. She was separated from her mother soon after birth because her mother was not taking proper care of her.

Since these animals are so close to human beings in their physical structure and behavior, they are immensely valuable in experiments approximating human reactions.

One experiment, for instance, is now underway to determine how different parts of the brain function and how they can be controlled.

Scientists are also testing the near-human animals in experiments of psychology, be-

havior, psychiatry, neurophysiology, immunology and biochemistry.

The new quarters of the Yerkes Center cost nearly \$2 million and will operate on an annual budget of about \$1 million a year, on funds from the Animal Resources Branch of the National Institutes of Health and from individual research grants.

A staff of 100 persons tend the animals, which are used strictly for medical and psychological research. Since the lower primates are susceptible to infectious diseases that infect man and because the big apes are aggressive toward strangers, the center is not open to the public except under special conditions.

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PSYCHIATRY

Depression Treated With Drug, Desipramine

► A DRUG THAT RELIEVES depression without tranquilizing the patient has shown continued and impressive success in tests.

The antidepressant, desipramine, "definitely" helped two out of every three people tested, said Dr. James E. Reeves of San Diego, Calif., in Medical Times, November, 1965.

Dr. Reeves called for increasing use of the drug as an instrument in therapy.

The exact action of the drug has not been well defined, Dr. Reeves noted. However, when tested on rats tranquilized with a chemical called reserpine, desipramine reversed symptoms of "profound sedation, muscular rigidity and decreased motor activity."

Thirty-three patients were selected for the experiment. All had been seen in private therapy and all had experienced depression.

Each was given 100 capsules containing desipramine to take after meals. Younger patients reported benefits within four to seven days, wrote Dr. Reeves. Older patients took somewhat longer—seven to 14 days.

Only one patient seemed to become worse with the drug. He grew agitated, tense and overactive. But this disappeared a few days after therapy was discontinued. Two of the 33 had adverse reactions of insomnia and stomach upset.

No adverse reactions were noted, however, in the 22 patients who showed a definite lift from depression, Dr. Reeves reported.

The antidepressant only relieves symptoms, however; it does not cure, Dr. Leon Yochelson, chairman of the psychiatry department at George Washington University School of Medicine, Washington, D.C., told SCIENCE SERVICE. But it does allow patients to be helped more easily with traditional methods of psychotherapy.

Desipramine may also be a key to understanding specific types of depression, Dr. Yochelson noted. It appears to work only on particular depressive states. Further research may illuminate exactly what kind of depression is affected by the drug and how this differs from other mental lows.

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Emory University

DISCRIMINATION LEARNING—Dr. Charles M. Rogers, senior psychologist, Yerkes Regional Primate Research Center, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga., tests a young female chimpanzee named Jenera. He is testing the ability of the chimp to discriminate between blocks of different shapes and colors.