

Malaria Eludes Drugs

by Barbara Culliton

MALARIA in Vietnam is being treated by a new combination of drugs that knocks the disease out of afflicted U.S. soldiers, but still will not protect them in advance against the prevalent strains.

Since 1960 when cases of *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria were found to be resistant to chloroquine therapy, hailed as the revolutionary cure after World War II, scientists have been looking for something to take its place. Despite reports that drugs in the sulfone family were "promising," the hunt is still on as cases mount.

Military doctors have "reverted" to quinine for the treatment of soldiers hit by the *falciparum* strain found in the Vietnamese jungles, but quinine alone brings about only a temporary cure, Col. William D. Tigertt, director of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research said. Government supplies of quinine, reported low a few months ago, are quite adequate to meet military needs, he added.

"Radical" or complete cures in malarial patients now can be effected by concurrent treatment with quinine and Daraprim (pyrimethamine) where neither drug worked alone, Lt. Col.

Thomas W. Sheehy of Walter Reed General Hospital recently reported to the Association of Military Surgeons meeting in Washington, D.C. Quinine and Daraprim "potentiate" or make each other work against *P. falciparum* malaria, Col. Sheehy found in treating soldiers in Vietnam; he cured 90% to 95% of his patients.

An anti-leprosy sulfone drug called diaminodiphenylsulfone (DDS), brought into use several months ago for the prevention and cure of *P. falciparum* malaria, is being given to some of the troops as a prophylaxis, but no conclusive evidence of its value has been reported. Sulfones given with chloroquine and quinine have temporary effects on malarial patients, but about 40% of the servicemen given this treatment suffer relapses of the disease within a matter of a few weeks.

The incidence of malaria among the troops during the rainy season last October to December was about 1,300 men with nine deaths. From January to July of this year, 2,000 cases have been reported and the number may increase still more now that the soldiers are faced with rainy months again.

Report Pussyfoots On Issues

► THE LONG-AWAITED Government report on the energy resources of the United States, a controversial document in preparation for some five years, will not step on anyone's toes. As finally released last week, the document is so mildly worded that the oil, gas and coal industries, as well as atomic energy proponents, should all be happy.

The report was rewritten so many times that no one has an accurate count, but the final draft made public today apparently avoids all controversies. If the report had been made public a year ago, that draft would have been much more controversial than the mild one now available.

One area is so toned down it is difficult to tell that it was once a hot issue. It concerns the availability of gas and oil from foreign sources. As an example, would oil from Venezuela be available in the U.S. if there were a national emergency? The U.S. Navy, a heavy user, contends Venezuelan oil would be but domestic coal producers firmly disagree, charging reliance on imports is chancey.

One positive recommendation made in the report is on the allocation of research funds. The final study calls for spending more money to support research on new uses for gas and coal, increasing the proportion of dollars this field is now receiving compared to research on nuclear sources of power, which has in general been adequately supported by the Atomic Energy Commission. Many oil, gas and coal producers charge that nuclear research is over-funded compared to fossil fuels.

The official findings of the report were:

1. The country's total resources seem adequate to satisfy expected energy requirements through the year 2000 at costs near today's levels, with no foreseeable shortage of either coal or nuclear fuels.

2. Liquid petroleum and natural gas are the fuels for which the smallest known and potential resources exist, but alternatives will certainly be available, such as those from shale oil, tar sands, and liquefaction of coal.

3. Advanced technology can enormously expand the economically available resources of nearly all fuels, and can provide substitutes for many.

4. Environmental pollution associated with the production and use of energy resources, both natural and nuclear, is a serious national problem.

Culture Shapes Mental Ills

HYSTERIA appears to be prevalent in African societies and rare in today's Western world. Indian schizophrenics are apt to be withdrawn and Italian schizophrenics, aggressive. Or at least this seems to be the pattern, according to an emerging branch of psychiatric research.

Culture as a force in shaping mental illness has until now been relatively neglected. But signs point to a change.

At a recent gathering of personality experts at Rice University, a psychiatrist and an anthropologist joined forces in summarizing the state of the art.

The mentally ill individual reflects in an "exaggerated and distorted manner important aspects of his culture," said Dr. E. D. Wittkower, director of Trans-cultural Psychiatric Studies at McGill University, and Dr. Guy Dubreuil, professor of anthropology at Montreal University.

For instance, gross forms of hysteria, such as hysterical blindness, have virtually vanished in Europe and the United States. Drs. Wittkower and Dubreuil attribute this to the increasing sophistication of Western people.

But among the illiterates of non-Western countries, gross hysteria is prevalent, possibly because the degree of conscious control over impulses is less well-developed, they said.

On the other hand, obsessional neuroses—persistent anxiety, compulsive hand-washing, phobias, obsession with a single idea and other troubled preoccupations—appear to be rare in developing countries, while they form a major part of Western psychiatric ills.

Anxiety in primitive societies is much more likely to be short and acute—a complete but temporary disruption of the personality, said Drs. Wittkower and Dubreuil.

Further, depression resulting from guilt and self-recrimination seems to be concentrated mostly in countries of Judeo-Christian background. Depression, on the whole, is reportedly rare in Africans.

There is reason to believe, said the doctors, that many of these differences can be attributed to a people's level of education. But culture-based child-rearing practices and national social structure are also factors.

