

Social Science Notes

PUBLIC HEALTH

Alcoholism Evaluated

A five-year Stanford University study on alcoholism to be published next summer, has established that:

Alcoholism is the number one mental health problem in nine states, according to hospital diagnoses.

Public drunkenness and drunken driving accounted for at least 40% of a total five million arrests last year.

Alcoholics constituted about 22% of all the male first admissions to 300 mental hospitals in the nation.

Partly because of the magnitude of the problem, it is "not reasonable" to set up a vast separate network for treating alcoholics, said Dr. Thomas F. A. Plaut, who presented the Stanford material to a national conference of state mental health authorities in Washington.

Such a network would rob other agencies of their personnel, he said. Moreover, alcoholism cannot be divorced from other psychological, social and vocational problems, he said.

SOCIOLOGY

L. A. Intermarriage Rate Up

Marriage between Mexican-Americans and "Anglos" has more than doubled in rate in Los Angeles County since 1933, a University of California study reported.

A possible explanation, though not made in the study, is the low level of prejudice against Mexican-Americans in the county, compared to other southwest areas.

Compared to a 10 percent intermarriage rate in the 20s and 30s, figures from 1963 reveal that 27 percent of the Mexican-American women chose Anglo husbands while 24 percent of the men chose Anglo wives.

These rates are considerably higher than in other communities with a large Mexican-American population, such as San Antonio, Texas, said the report, produced by the Mexican-American Study Project at UCLA.

ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAPHY

Football Player Wired for Brain Waves

Northwestern University wired one of its football players this season in the name of brain research. The results indicate that though a halfback may break his leg, he is not likely to become punchdrunk.

With electrodes glued to his scalp and a radio transmitter in his helmet, halfback Woody Campbell had no trouble playing football, he said, while his brain waves were being broadcast to Dr. John R. Hughes sitting in the press box.

Dr. Hughes of Northwestern's Medical School said the brain waves changed from normal only during severe body impacts. But complete recovery of the normal rhythm followed immediately, indicating no head injury.

Medical Science Notes

DRUG TESTING

OK Likely on DMSO Tests

Experimental human testing of dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) may be resumed after a year's ban on research with the controversial, so-called wonder drug. After reports little more than a year ago that DMSO, a by-product of paper pulp, could cure almost any disease, there was a rash of poorly controlled, hazardous experimentation across the country.

The Food and Drug Administration, which took the compound off the market and prohibited further human tests at that time, is reconsidering its position and is expected to permit clinical trials by researchers who obtain prior permission to carry out their projects.

During the year's blackout a few scientists have continued human tests with special permission. In Cleveland, doctors have reported marked success and no adverse side effects in treating patients with scleroderma, a heretofore incurable disease involving connective tissues of any part of the body.

BURNS

Improved Treatment for Burns

An improved treatment for severe burns has been reported, adding a colloidal silver nitrate complex alternatively with silver nitrate for large-area burns.

Both treatments were developed at Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis. The colloidal silver complex alone has proved as effective as silver nitrate in a number of patients with burns covering up to 30 percent of the body, and it virtually does away with the need for mineral supplements.

Dr. William W. Monafó reported one patient with burns covering 58 percent of his body who had been treated with silver nitrate. But he also required 30 grams of sodium chloride to restore salt losses from highly vascularized wounds. The salt caused severe diarrhea and nausea, but when the dressings were changed to colloidal silver nitrate complex oral administration of the salt was stopped, serum sodium and chloride returned to normal and diarrhea ceased. Subsequent skin grafts grew rapidly under the colloidal dressing and the patient recovered.

HEALTH

Troops Thrive in High Altitude

Harmful effects on troops living in mountainous terrain are greatly exaggerated, medical authorities in India have concluded.

A comparative study made by military doctors has shown that the Indian Armed Forces' personnel located in high altitudes suffer less sickness than those living in the plains.