

# behavioral sciences

## PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC DRUGS

### Aggression and lithium

Lithium, the controversial psychiatric drug approved for use in the United States about a year ago (SN: 4/18/70, p. 390), has been shown to be effective in the treatment of the manic phase of manic-depressive psychosis. It has also been shown to have an inhibitory effect on aggressive behavior in animals.

Dr. Michael H. Sheard of the department of psychiatry at Yale used 12 male inmates at a maximum-security state prison in Somers, Conn., to conduct a study of the effect of lithium on human aggression. Inmates with a pre-prison history of three or more cases of violent assault, a prison history of continual verbal and physical aggressive behavior and with no overt psychosis or brain damage were chosen. The subjects were given a daily dosage of lithium carbonate in a 300-milligram capsule for four weeks at a time over a three-month period. Placebo capsules of identical appearance and taste were administered during the alternate four-week periods.

Results, reported in the March 12 NATURE, show a significant reduction in aggression during the lithium periods, with only minor side effects.

## HYPERKINESIS

### Amphetamines approved for children

For 30 years physicians, psychologists and educators have been suggesting that hyperkinesis in school children be treated by the administration of amphetamines. Dextroamphetamine and methylphenidate, commonly used stimulants, have the paradoxical effect of calming down inattentive, disorderly and physically overactive children.

Because these drugs are commonly abused and are potentially addictive and because hyperkinesis is not always properly diagnosed, there has been widespread condemnation of their use. Even though it has been shown that performance and concentration improve, some parents and educators fear that uncontrolled use is being made of the drugs to subdue the normal reactions of healthy children.

A Government-appointed panel convened by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare has now declared that amphetamines are a safe and proper treatment for hyperkinetic school children up to the age of 12 or 13. It states that no danger exists as long as the treatment is cautiously applied after adequate diagnosis.

## THE JOCASTA COMPLEX

### The genius and his mother

The degree of mother-child interaction is a factor in determining the degree of eminence a child achieves in later life (SN: 3/13/71, p. 183). Carried one step further this can be applied to the psychological development of genius, the extreme of mental development.

Dr. Mathew Besdine, clinical professor of psychology at Adelphi University in Garden City, N. Y., suggests in the March PSYCHOLOGY TODAY that a necessary condition in the development of genius is the presence of a "Jocasta mother."

The Jocasta (mother and wife of Oedipus) person-

ality is an intelligent and sensitive woman, emotionally and intellectually starved by the absence of an adequate husband. She chooses one child (male or female) to become the exclusive focus of her attention and intelligence, her sole companion and love object. The demands of the Jocasta mother lead to precocious development and create a personality that must be recognized.

Basing his findings on historical examples, Dr. Besdine cautions that excessive mothering, partially responsible for extraordinary development of gifts and talents, may also be responsible for latent or overt homosexuality, guilt, narcissism, paranoia, masochism and intense fear of intimacy and love.

## WOMEN'S LIB

### Utilizing the female work force

Serious inequalities in the labor market infuriate the advocates of women's liberation. Despite the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 the lot of the woman worker in the United States has shown little or no improvement.

These inequalities are documented in a new report of the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor.

Statistics from the past five years show that 70 percent of the 30 million employed women worked out of economic necessity, not as a means of self fulfillment or recognition. The median year round full-time wage for women was \$4,457, compared with \$7,664 for men. Women were three times as likely as men to earn less than \$5,000. Only 37 percent of all professional and technical workers were women. This included one percent of the Federal judges, one percent of the engineers, three percent of the lawyers, seven percent of the physicians and nine percent of the nation's scientists.

Nineteen percent of the women with four years of college were employed as clerical workers or in lesser positions, and starting salaries for women with bachelor's degrees were as much as \$86 a month less than for men with the same education.

## SOCIAL SCIENCES

### Large teams in major centers

From 1900 to 1965, the most important research in anthropology, economics, statistics, the philosophy and history of science, politics, psychology and sociology has come from large teams of scholars working in major intellectual centers.

This fact is accounted for by the accessibility of computers, laboratories, specialists in other fields and complex urban cultures, suggests a study sponsored by the Mental Health Institute at the University of Michigan. The researchers based their findings on a retrospective study of 62 important advances (stemming from 101 separate contributions) in the social sciences that led to new precepts or operations or that opened up new sectors of knowledge.

The United States, since 1930, has accounted for 75 percent of these contributions. Most of these came from great capitals and university centers such as Cambridge, Mass. (with 11 contributions), Chicago (10), New York (7), Washington, D.C. (5), Ann Arbor, Mich., and New Haven, Conn. (4 each).