

# Social Science Notes

## PSYCHIATRY

### Rural Neurosis Different

Rural Americans may have a weakness for different kinds of neurosis than their urban counterparts, according to a Kansas study of accident victims.

In a group of 150 patients who came to the Menninger Foundation suffering long-term mental trauma after a frightening accident, 40 were specifically afflicted with "free-floating anxiety"—tension, great uneasiness, irritability and withdrawal. These 40 could be likened, reported Dr. Herbert C. Modlin in the February American Journal of Psychiatry, to the "hurt animal who withdraws to the safe seclusion of his cave to lick his wounds. If someone approaches, he growls an uneasy warning."

Curiously, the 40 patients typically came from simple, limited, rural backgrounds. They were "literal and unimaginative," had eighth-grade educations and traditional values, such as: "Men work, do not cry, drink beer, hunt and fish; women keep house, rear children." Dr. Modlin suggested this simple cultural background produced a simple ego structure, whose troubles were manifested in this "relatively simple" anxiety syndrome.

To develop "symbolic illnesses"—phobias, obsessions, or hypochondria requires more ego sophistication than these patients possessed, he said.

In fact, other studies would seem to back up Dr. Modlin's conclusions. Neuroses in industrial societies are often phobias and obsessions, which seem to be rare in primitive societies. Conversely, the free-floating anxiety syndrome is apparently uncommon on college campuses or Madison Avenue.

## BIRTH CONTROL

### Voluntary Sterilization Is In

Government funds through Medicaid now cover voluntary sterilization operations for both men and women in between one and two dozen states, reported the Association for Voluntary Sterilization, Inc., in New York.

Specific payment schedules for the operation have been set in nine states, including New York, while California's Medicaid program will provide money according to "customary" fees.

Ten other states will say only that they pay for surgical procedures, implying that also includes voluntary sterilization, said Dr. H. Curtis Wood Jr., medical consultant to the association. He said the state programs represent "a totally new level of Government recognition and support for this method of birth control."

Of the 27 states covered by Medicaid, only Kentucky and Louisiana stated they do not pay for the operation.

## POVERTY PROGRAM

### Head Start Expansion

President Johnson's message to Congress last week calling for an expansion and follow-through of Project Head Start is not, strictly speaking, an expansion.

The 1968 budget for Head Start provides exactly

as many places or "slots," as were offered in 1967—187,000 openings for the full year; 550,000 for the summer program or some variation thereof.

There is, however, an additional \$135 million for follow-through in the first grade, which the President included in a 12-point \$650 million program to help impoverished children, announced last week.

But the money is intended to supply such things as more teachers, better psychological and medical services, a parent's program and culturally enriching trips for first graders, rather than the innovative changes in the classroom that are the mark of Head Start.

Such follow-through services are, however, needed to preserve some of the changes made in Head Start children and the money is already earmarked and assured for that purpose.

## PERCEPTION

### Cars in Collision

A vast majority of automobile collisions at night occur because drivers approaching an intersection see the other car coming in from the side as a stationary object, Australian physicist Dr. Peter Eccles reported.

He told delegates attending an Australian Advancement of Science meeting in Melbourne that normal peripheral vision is not attuned to picking out the moving object, and that 85 percent of the drivers failed to see cars on a collision course with their own.

Peripheral vision was intended to sense moving objects in a stationary field. In an automobile the field moves too.

One way to solve the problem is to remove side objects from the car—wind-vents, stickers, window frames. Another answer, for the driver, is to keep his head moving all the time when approaching a dangerous intersection.

## PUBLIC POLICY

### Research vs. Privacy

Universities and institutions have an obligation to protect against invasion of privacy whenever research into human behavior is undertaken within their domain.

This was the policy statement released last week by a special panel of the President's Office of Science and Technology.

Headed by Dr. Kenneth E. Clark of the University of Rochester (N.Y.), the panel noted that most behavioral research poses no threat to individual privacy. But enough invasions have occurred to warrant some protective measures.

Thus Government agencies supporting research should require institutions to accept responsibility for the ethical design of research projects.

Close Government supervision on this score, however, is not necessary, the panel decided.

The new policy statement does not differ much from standards set by the professional associations. But it does focus attention anew on the individual's right to decide when and where he reveals his inner thoughts, feeling and actions—a right now and then forgotten in the search for knowledge.