

behavioral sciences

SUICIDOLOGY

Psychiatrists suicide-prone

A National Institute of Mental Health survey of suicides committed by physicians reveals that psychiatrists are the most prone to self-destruction and pediatricians the least.

The study focused on 249 doctor-suicides between May 1965 and November 1967, and was reported in the latest *BULLETIN OF SUICIDOLOGY*, published by the institute.

Psychiatrists were six times as likely to kill themselves as were pediatricians. Women accounted for 6.5 percent of all doctor suicides. Abuse of alcohol or drugs was a key factor in 40 percent of the suicides.

Overdoses of drugs, usually some kind of barbiturates, leads the list of suicide causes with 72. Firearms ran a close second, with 65.

The average age of the suicides is only 49, with the age range between 25 and 87.

"Impressive are the numbers who commit suicide early in their careers," the report observes.

The study concludes that suicide causes more physician deaths than auto accidents, plane crashes, drownings and homicide combined.

CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

Eight is great; nine is fine

According to British findings, most people reach peak efficiency between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. Dr. W. P. Colquhoun of the Medical Research Council's applied psychology research unit at Cambridge, bases his conclusion on the relation between the natural 24-hour (circadian) rhythm of the body, duty cycles and working efficiency. His study involved 300 subjects—a greater number than used in similar industrial investigations—over a five-year period.

Conversely, Dr. Colquhoun found that the lowest point of efficiency came at four a.m. He adds that where the work was physically exhausting the time of peak efficiency came earlier.

The advantage of a work regimen of eight hours on and 16 off lies in the facts that shifts could be arranged to avoid working just after waking.

Dr. Colquhoun prefers the Russian system of working its cosmonauts at the same time each day as opposed to the U.S. system of rotating duty times.

DRUGS

Heroin addicts register

A British Government official estimates that there may be as many as 10,000 registered heroin addicts in his country by 1972.

C. G. Jeffery, Home Office drug inspector, says that the 1968 census of registered heroin addicts will show about 2,000. He spoke at a meeting on drug addiction at Bradford University.

Jeffery says that the number of registered addicts has been increasing by 50 percent each year since 1960.

About one-third of the 2,000 registered addicts are teenagers. "Heroin is no longer exclusive to the jazz

world," Jeffery says. "Many of today's addicts come from the university, both postgraduate and undergraduate."

In Britain, a heroin addict need only register with Government authorities in order to receive the drug from his physician.

DELINQUENCY

Give us action

A survey of the television viewing preferences of British juvenile delinquents shows that they tend to prefer exciting and aggressive programs more and educational and informative programs less than do their nondelinquent fellows.

The study, conducted by a team led by Dr. T. A. F. Noble, vice chancellor of Leicester University, focused on boys and girls in the 10-20 age group.

The report says that delinquent boys tend to be particularly attracted to hero figures in the action serials, while girls are most drawn to popular entertainers.

Both delinquent boys and boys with a low I.Q. perceive more aggression in some programs than do nondelinquent and higher I.Q. boys. The report says that for delinquent and low I.Q. boys "perceptions of reality and of aggression seem to converge. What is real is likely to be seen to be aggressive, and what is aggressive is likely to be seen as real."

The survey notes that "it may well be that delinquents think about and use television in a different manner from nondelinquents, but this question requires much more study."

SOCIOLOGY

Just the facts

A call for more responsible journalistic reporting of interracial confrontations is sounded by the Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence at Brandeis University in the February 1969 *RIOT DATA REVIEW*.

"Unwittingly or not," the review says, "the press has been constructing a scenario on armed uprisings. The story line of this scenario is not totally removed from reality. There have been a few shoot-outs with the police, and a handful may have been planned. But no wave of uprisings and no set pattern of murderous conflict have developed—at least not yet."

The review notes that race relations in the U.S. are presently characterized by mutual resentment, distrust and fear, and warns that the danger of overreaction on both sides is very great.

"Newspapers and magazines which overdramatize the violence and underplay less dramatic but equally important events such as negotiation efforts do little more than escalate existing tensions and fears," says the review.

In a survey of 25 sniping incidents last year, the review concludes that press coverage "at both the local and national level was inclined toward imprecise, distorted, inaccurate reporting. In some instances, the press revealed a tendency to needlessly sensationalize the news."

The review devoted particular attention to the July disorders in Cleveland and Peoria.