

behavioral sciences

Gathered from the 125th annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in Bal Harbour, Fla.

HEART TRANSPLANTS

Stress, drugs linked to psychoses

Severe psychiatric difficulties have been the result of certain cases of heart transplantation.

Dr. Donald Lunde reports that psychoses from the trauma of major surgery and anti-rejection drugs are usually temporary and of short duration. However, three patients developed severe complications after 18 months of observations, and had shown no previous signs of psychiatric problems.

All three were receiving dosages of a drug, prednisone, used to prevent tissue rejection. There is evidence to suggest a link between the drug and psychosis, but nothing definite has been established.

Psychotic reaction can also be blamed on the stress a patient undergoes waiting for a donor and on the changes in his perception of himself before and after transplant.

Dr. Lunde, who has been a psychiatric consultant on Dr. Norman Shumway's heart transplant team at Stanford University Medical Center, feels that as transplant surgery becomes more common "distortions of personality can be expected since personal personality and self-image are so closely tied to body-image."

RECOVERY

Self-help in psychiatry

A national organization, Recovery, Inc., established 30 years ago as a way to reverse the increasing national dependence of the emotionally and mentally ill on outside help and intervention, has successfully progressed to include 700 groups and 7,000 members in the United States and Canada.

The purpose of the organization is to prevent relapses in former mental patients and chronicity in nervous patients.

Members of Recovery, Inc., are former psychoneurotics or mental patients. Groups meet regularly in their own communities and are led by the former patients who have received leadership training under Recovery, Inc., auspices.

The organization works in cooperation with psychiatrists and its philosophy of self-help "is coupled with a sound reliance on professional assistance and guidance in the hours of need," said Dr. Hanus J. Grosz, who introduced the members of the organization at the meeting.

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Psychoses and enzyme activity

An increase in activity of the enzymes creatine phosphokinase (CPK) and aldolase in the blood of more than 100 acutely psychotic patients has been reported.

Acute psychotics—schizophrenics—were used with non-psychotic control patients in a study that strengthened the hypothesis that biochemical disturbances can be

related to a brain disturbance underlying psychotic behavior, reports Dr. Herbert Y. Meltzer of the University of Chicago's Pritzker School of Medicine.

The activity of serum CPK and aldolase is increased in approximately 50 percent of acute schizophrenic patients. The psychotic patients with the increased enzyme activity appear to be more disturbed than those with normal activity.

However, Dr. Meltzer warns, the significance of this is by no means clear.

Studies by Dr. Meltzer also indicated that higher levels of enzyme activity in the patients may exist in the parents of these patients.

HEROIN ADDICTION

Cyclazocine therapy successful

A method of predicting which narcotics addicts would do well under cyclazocine therapy and which under methadone therapy (SN: 4/12, p. 364) has been developed, along with successful results of treatment.

Of 31 male addicts studied, those using heroin to reduce anger, tension and disappointments or to aid in their ability to work or study, respond well to treatment with methadone.

For those viewing heroin as part of social interaction, the heroin-antagonistic capacity of non-narcotic cyclazocine may yield optimal results, reports Dr. Richard B. Resnick of the New York Medical College.

Dr. Resnick says he has developed a new technique whereby the daily dose of cyclazocine can be increased to block the effects of heroin within four days. It takes six weeks with methadone.

The cyclazocine program was found most likely to succeed when the patient had a continuing relationship with a woman.

MENTAL HEALTH

National program recommended

A mental health program aimed at young children has been recommended on a national scale.

The necessity to reach the child before five years of age—the time when an illness can be treated before it turns into a severe disorder—is emphasized by the Joint Commission on the Mental Health of Children in a report scheduled for June delivery to the Congress.

The commission calls for a coordinated network of federally funded child development centers throughout the nation. Each state would have a commission and child and youth authorities would be set up locally. Their help would reach everyone, but the major emphasis would be on children.

Each neighborhood child center would serve at least 1,000 families and possibly, eventually, health workers would visit every child's home soon after birth.

The program is estimated to cost \$6 billion to \$10 billion a year for the next 10 years.

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