

PSYCHIATRY

# Recovers from Insanity Within Fifteen Minutes

## Other Patients Who Seem To Suffer From Mental Disease or Delirium Relieved by Nicotinic Acid

**R**ECOVERY from insanity within 15 minutes after a single dose of nicotinic acid has been announced as an example of the spectacular achievements of the pellagra remedy in conquering some forms of mental disease.

Most of the patients who have been rescued by this chemical from stupor, lethargy, depression showed no signs of pellagra, Dr. V. P. Sydenstricker and Dr. H. M. Cleckley, of the University of Georgia, declared in their report to the American Psychiatric Association meeting in Cincinnati.

The spectacular, 15-minute recovery occurred in the case of a 66-year-old man who was admitted to the hospital in a greatly agitated state, not realizing where he was and behaving irrationally. He shouted in broken sentences, tried to leap out of bed and was constantly overactive and confused. The doctor's description is typical of the old idea of an insane person.

While the nicotinic acid solution was still flowing into his vein, this man became quiet and cooperative and within

a few minutes showed no sign of his mental illness.

Many other patients who seem to be suffering from mental disease or exhaustion delirium, even without signs of pellagra, may, the Georgia doctors believe, be relieved of their symptoms of nicotinic acid.

*Science News Letter, June 1, 1940*

## Sugar May Help "Nerves"

**F**OR that feeling of nervousness or apprehension, take a lump of sugar or some other sweet.

With the whole world feeling nervous and apprehensive these days, that may prove a popular and helpful slogan. It is based on a report to the American Psychiatric Association, that a strikingly large number of "nervous" patients have abnormally low concentrations of sugar in their blood.

The discovery was made by Dr. William Y. Baker, of Seattle. The patients he examined complained of anxiety, fear, apprehension, tension states, sleeplessness, sweating and spells of uneasiness.

"In some instances of both normals and neurotics," he reported here, "the degree of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) approximates the level seen in induced coma of insulin shock therapy."

When he discovered the low blood sugar levels in normal persons as well as neurasthenic patients, Dr. Baker investigated further and discovered that these normal persons had vague symptoms of hunger, restlessness or uneasiness at times.

The low blood sugar levels, he said, should be investigated further by psychiatrists because they may have definite bearing on mental illness.

*Science News Letter, June 1, 1940*

## Lie-Awake-Detector

**A** NEW medical instrument for fighting insomnia, which might be called the Lie-Awake-Detector because it shows up those who "haven't-slept-a-

# RADIO

Dr. H. M. Marvin, acting executive secretary of American Heart Association, will give facts about the greatest peace-time killer, heart disease, as guest scientist on "Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over the coast to coast network of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Thursday, June 6, 4:00 p.m., EDST, 3:00 EST, 2:00 CST, 1:00 MST, 12:00 PST.

Listen in on your local station. Listen in each Thursday.

wink-all-night" took a bow at the meeting of the American Psychiatric Association.

Dr. Burtrum C. Schiele, of the University of Minnesota, who invented the device, calls it a motilograph. One leg of the insomniac's bed is fitted into a stirrup by which his every movement is transmitted to the recording part of the apparatus. Next morning he may be confronted with a black-and-white record of the six or eight hours' sound sleeping he did and the few movements he actually made during the night he thought he spent largely in tossing around in bed.

The instrument shows individual movements clearly up to six per minute. The average sleeper moves, changes position or moves some part of his body from 20 to 60 times during the night, Dr. Schiele found. The first half of the night is in most cases decidedly quieter than the last half, although there is a pre-sleep period of settling down in which there is a fair degree of restlessness. This period lasts from a few minutes to a half-hour.

A heavy meal or excitement increases the restlessness during sleep.

When the Lie-Awake-Detector's record was compared with the nurse's sleep chart, the latter was generally found to be reliable, Dr. Schiele reported, although "certain notable exceptions occur."

*Science News Letter, June 1, 1940*

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