

PSYCHOLOGY—NUTRITION

Color Blindness Improved By Treatment With Vitamin A

Men Turned Down for Defense Jobs Are Able, After Treatment, To Pass the Same Tests They Failed

COLOR vision can be so improved by taking vitamin A that men turned down for defense jobs because of color blindness were able to pass the tests and get the jobs, it was reported in Nashville, Tenn., to the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology by Drs. Knight Dunlap and Robert D. Loken, of the University of California at Los Angeles.

This new use of vitamin A in the war effort followed research by Dr. Dunlap and Dr. Loken. Two groups of eight individuals each were matched for degree of color blindness. Those in one group were given one capsule containing 25,000 units of vitamin A each day for twelve days. Those in the other group were given capsules which they thought contained the vitamin but which contained only milk sugar.

Those taking the vitamin A reduced their total errors on a color blindness test from 88 before treatment to 38 afterwards. There was practically no change in the group which had had the sugar.

And here is what happened when six other color blind young men were treated, usually with one capsule a day of vitamin A: Age 24, 100 capsules reduced errors from 10 to 5; age 28, 10 capsules reduced errors from 10 to 3; age 25, 8 capsules a day for seven days reduced errors from 18 to 0 on one test and from 5 to 0 on another; age 23, 25 capsules reduced errors from 12 to 0 on one test and from 12 to 3 on another; age 24, 25 capsules reduced errors from 10 to 0 on one test and from 7 to 3 on the other; age 28, 60 capsules reduced errors from 21 to 0 on one test and from 12 to 0 on the other.

Time is important in some cases, but heavy dosages for a short time may clear up other cases, the investigators said.

Color blindness is not something that always exists in the same degree if it exists at all, the investigators stressed. Cases vary, they said, from those in which there is a very slight deficiency in color vision through the average, which is considered "normal," to cases

in which the color vision is so far above the average that they may well be called "super-normal."

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Success Lifts Morale

IF A MAN gets a raise in pay, a promotion or even a word of praise and a handshake from his supervisor on the job, his morale is improved for the

whole war effort as well as for his particular task.

This was indicated by a report to the Society by Prof. Robert F. Creegan, of Cumberland University.

Every victory in a specific endeavor, said Prof. Creegan, raises the individual's morale for that type of endeavor and for all types of striving which compose the life quest. On the other hand, extreme deprivation in any form, economic, emotional, or other is incompatible with high morale among citizens, he indicated. "The well nourished individual," he said, "makes the good citizen and soldier."

America and other democracies have definite advantages over our enemies as regards morale because in a democracy, the individual citizen knows that he gets a reward and appreciation for the work he does.

Science News Letter, April 11, 1942

MEDICINE

Deaths During Childbirth May Be Due to New Disease

Clots of Blood and Other Material Found Sometimes To Enter Circulatory System and Be Carried to Lungs

A NEW and sometimes fatal disease of childbirth previously diagnosed under such vague terms as "obstetric shock," was described by Dr. Paul E. Steiner and C. C. Lushbaugh of the University of Chicago, at a meeting of the American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists in Philadelphia.

Death is caused by clots of blood and other material in connection with childbirth, which gain entrance to the mother's circulatory system and are carried to her lungs. Here extensive damage is done to the blood vessels which may hemorrhage.

Dr. Steiner suggests that the same phenomenon may cause death of the unborn child.

While the authors' conclusions are based on the deaths of only eight mothers and experiments with animals, they will attempt to show that this disease is "a relatively common cause of sudden death during labor."

If they succeed, they will have explained why women in labor sometimes suddenly undergo shock and die for reasons the usual autopsy does not show. Dr. Steiner and Mr. Lushbaugh made their discovery of the cause of death in

such cases by the procedure of examining the lungs of the victims with a microscope.

Their examination revealed the blood vessels of the lungs to be clogged with foreign bodies which were identified as having come from the womb. When this type of material was injected into the blood stream of animals, it again passed to the lungs, producing similar effects.

Just how the material got into the blood stream of the mothers is not so clear. The authors suggest it might have been due to unusually powerful spasms of labor which tore the mothers' placental membrane and so permitted uterine debris to enter the blood stream. Here it would be carried immediately to the lungs and lodge in the vessels. Sudden showers of these foreign particles lodging in the lungs would produce the symptoms of shock, preceded by a chill.

Six of the eight mothers the authors studied had chills at the beginning of their illness. It is suggested therefore, that a chill during labor does not necessarily mean the start of a bacterial infection, but rather the clogging of the blood vessels