

PSYCHIATRY

Electric Shock Treatment Shortens Delirium Tremens

New Method for Putting Pink Elephants To Rout Reported to Psychiatrists; Sub-Shock Doses Used

REMOVING pink elephants by electric shock is the new treatment announced by Dr. Nathaniel Berkwitz, of Minneapolis, at the American Psychiatric Association meeting in Boston. The duration of delirium tremens following prolonged alcoholism "appeared to be definitely shortened," said Dr. Berkwitz, by giving harmless "sub-shock" dosages of electric current.

Encouraging results were reported from the treatment of mental disease with electric shock, by Dr. Clarence A. Neymann, Dr. Vladimir G. Urse, and Dr. John Madden, of Cook County Hospital, Chicago.

These psychiatrists also used the treatment for chronic alcoholism with "some suggestion that we may have helped patients."

A recovery rate of about 59% in a mixed group of schizophrenics and of 100% in patients with depressions were obtained.

"These rather astounding, at present temporary, results," they believe, "are due to the fact that treatments were given daily and that the patient was treated until a deep retrograde amnesia (forgetfulness) was produced."

Possibilities of giving this treatment to patients outside a hospital were discussed by Dr. Louis Wender and Dr. David Beres of Hillside Hospital, Bellerose, N. Y., and Dr. Benjamin H. Balsler of New York State Psychiatric Institute. Giving the treatment in the doctor's office or hospital dispensary saved many patients from commitment to mental hospitals and enabled a number of patients to continue at their jobs during the course of treatment.

Sub-convulsive shock by means of a special machine producing a high-voltage, low-amperage type of Faradic current, was described by Dr. Walter A. Thompson, of Rockland State Hospital, Orangeburg, N. Y. While it is not claimed that this treatment has curative value, it has been found useful in reducing anti-social behavior in some patients.

Statistical results from electric shock

compare favorably with metrazol and insulin methods, according to Dr. Joseph Epstein, of Pinewood Sanitarium, N. Y., and he believes this method to be distinctly less hazardous.

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Cauliflower Brain

THE TERM cauliflower brain sounds like a particularly fanciful bit of slang but cases of mental deterioration in which the brain actually looks like a cauliflower have been reported. One such case was described by Dr. Andrew J. Akelaitis, of the University of Rochester School of Medicine.

The patient showed progressive mental deterioration with transient neurological symptoms and died at the age of 32 years. Examination of the brain after death revealed the shrivelling of the brain tissue in the frontal lobes and elsewhere into the little granules that gave it a cauliflower appearance. Microscopic examination showed that certain arteries were closed so that blood could not get through to nourish some parts of the brain.

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Almost Perfect Record

A STRIKING example of how psychiatry can prevent breakdowns in the Army was described by Dr. Wilfred Bloomberg, of Boston, and Capt. Robert W. Hyde, of the U. S. Army Medical Corps.

A practically perfect record for the past year has been achieved by psychiatrists at the Boston induction center. Examining more than 15,000 inductees, they missed only six who should have been turned down.

Pointing out that undetected cases of nervous and mental ailment in the last war have cost the government around \$30,000 a piece, these psychiatrists urged a continuation of induction boards such as the one operating so successfully in Boston.

This Board not only turned down ob-

vious mental disorders, but also psychopathic personalities, asocial and criminal types, alcoholics and homo-sexuals.

In other words, Boston selectees were turned down if they seemed more likely than the average (1) to break down under strain or (2) to be trouble makers.

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Reclaim Epileptic Manpower

CALLING the epileptic the "forgotten man," Dr. Joseph L. Fetterman and Miss Belle Greve, of Cleveland, Ohio, outlined the "Auracraft," a project for reclaiming this idle manpower of 500,000 epileptics in the United States, the great majority of whom are now unable to work, they pointed out.

The "Auracraft" is a work project in which each patient is assigned a "buddy" who works with him, Dr. Fetterman explained. Each watches out for the other and a nurse is in constant attendance in the event of an attack.

In Cleveland the "Auracraft" has already aided more than 50 epileptics to gain skill, training and self-confidence, enabling them in a number of cases to go into private industry.

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DR. ROBERT KHO-SENG LIM

The director of the Medical Relief Corps of the Chinese Red Cross was elected a foreign associate of the National Academy of Sciences by a unanimous vote—the highest honor which this scientific organization can confer upon a foreign scientist. Dr. Lim is on the Burma front, directing the work of nine mobile Red Cross units. His work is supported by agencies of United China Relief.