

PSYCHOLOGY

Youngsters Show Up Well

Twenty-four-year study of normal children shows that younger generation is not "going to the dogs," even though times were unsettled during formative years.

► THE YOUNGER generation is not "going to the dogs."

Intelligence tests of young children should not be taken as seriously as they often are.

Little girls learn to lie earlier than little boys, on the average.

These are some of the findings of a 24-year study of normal children, the longest in the history of research, conducted by Dr. Jean Walker Macfarlane, professor of psychology at the University of California.

Dr. Macfarlane sought to learn more about the problems and satisfactions of children and their parents. She started the study, of 250 families and their children, in 1928. The children were followed from birth to maturity.

The psychologist pointed out that the subjects of the study grew up in an era of many changes and disruptions, including World War II.

"Most of the parents and children lived through it and, in our experience and in contrast to the many claims of the breakdown of morality in our nation, came out with greater understanding, more sense of personal and social responsibility and more personal integrity," Dr. Macfarlane said.

Intelligence tests were given the children at yearly intervals until the age of 18. One out of three children changed 20 or more I.Q. points between six and 18 years; while eight or nine out of 10 changed more than 10 I.Q. points after starting school.

The child's I.Q. score can vary considerably, depending upon his state of health, his worries or lack of worries, his mood, his confidence in himself and his interest in taking a test and upon many other factors. With increasing age, however, tests became more predictive.

As for physical growth, Dr. Macfarlane found the girls reached half of their final

height at the age of 20 months, the boys by 26 months. During adolescence the difference in physical maturation was even more marked, and is most marked in junior high school when the girls on the average are two full years ahead of the boys. There are six or seven years difference between the earliest maturing girls and the latest maturing boys.

There was a marked sex difference in the use of devices to cope with childhood problems.

"The girls learned to sidestep the heavy socializing pressures by evasions or outright 'lies' by the tender age of four, when 50% of the mothers reported 'lies' as a problem," Dr. Macfarlane said.

The boys did not hit upon the protective device of lying in sizable numbers until the age of six. But the boys indulged in tempers longer.

Dr. Macfarlane said that the most rewarding part of the study was evidence of how tough and adaptable the human organism is. Many of the subjects, she said, "with many cards stacked against them who should have become delinquent or psychotic not only did not, but rather turned into substantial, mature and zestful adults."

Science News Letter, May 24, 1952

MEDICINE

Shelved Drug Effective Against Fatal Fungus

► A DRUG once put on the shelf as useless is staging a comeback in the fight against serious, sometimes fatal fungus diseases in humans.

The drug is called stilbamidine. It belongs to the chemical group of diamidines. The diseases it is stopping are blastomycosis and actinomycosis. The latter is known as "lumpy jaw" when it attacks cattle. Four patients with the first disease and one with the second began to recover promptly after treatment with stilbamidine was started, Drs. Emanuel B. Schoenbach and Joseph M. Miller of New York reported at the meeting of the American Society for Clinical Investigation in Atlantic City.

Tried in two patients with brain inflammation from infection with the yeast-like fungus called *Torula*, the drug did not help. However, the two doctors recommend further trials of stilbamidine and related chemicals in treatment of the fungus infections.

Science News Letter, May 24, 1952

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