

PSYCHIATRY

Psychiatric Interview Aid

Recording life histories, then playing them back, can speed psychiatric interviewing through full examination of reasons for and thoughts during the pauses.

► A MICROPHONE and a sound recorder can help speed psychiatric interviewing and even psychoanalysis.

The apparatus does this because it records not only what a person says but the pauses as he talks. When the record is played back, the patient can very often tell why he paused at that particular point and what he was thinking of as he paused.

The new method, developed by Dr. Walter Toman of Harvard University, is reported in the American Psychological Association's *Journal of Consulting Psychology* (Feb.).

In psychoanalysis, he points out, the basic rule is for the patient to say everything that comes into his mind. Whenever he pauses, the psychoanalyst may prod him. The prodding has two risks: 1. The patient may be diverted from the trend of free association, or of saying whatever comes into his mind. 2. The patient may be glad of the interruption if it gives him a chance to avoid talking about what was in his mind when he paused. The topic in his mind at the pause, however, may be im-

portant and it may take much time before he and the psychoanalyst get back to it.

To test the possibility of learning more quickly what goes on in the mind during a pause, Dr. Toman had 35 men and women, aged 18 to 34, speak their life histories into a microphone, allowing five to 10 minutes for each history.

The record was then played back and at each pause the machine was stopped and the man or woman asked to tell what was in his or her mind during the pause. Of the average of 54 pauses, an average of 17 could be interpreted by the speaker as being other than the "mere formal difficulty" of phrasing or searching for a word.

When called back for another session one to three months later, these men and women could remember an average of about five pauses. The content of the rest had been forgotten. About half of these were emotion-laden memories of early life. The rest were recent memories concerning present activities and relationships or thoughts about the test itself.

Science News Letter, April 25, 1953

MEDICINE

Link Imbalance to Cancer

► TOO MUCH or too little manufacturing of sex hormones in the body may lay the groundwork in women of 20 to 40 years of age for breast cancers which appear at 55 or 60.

Measurement of the exact amount of imbalance, now possible, might permit correction of this factor so that breast cancer never appears.

Dr. Robert Huseby, associate professor of surgery at the University of Colorado, has used both male and female sex hormones together in nine cancer sufferers. All had breast cancer upon which it was no longer possible to operate with any chance of success.

Three of the cases gave good to excellent responses, one showed a questionable response and five derived no benefit at all. The amount of both male and female hormones was varied according to the individual imbalance found in the patient.

To find out about these important imbalances, Dr. Huseby does such things as grafting a vagina on a castrated male mouse and transplanting a female mouse's ovary to her spleen.

Drs. Leo Samuels and Don Nelson of the University of Utah have developed a method for chemically measuring the hormones

which circulate in the blood. With these measurements, it might be possible to determine which women are susceptible to various kinds of cancer. Thus the condition could be corrected before the cancer develops, if the right measures were taken promptly.

Science News Letter, April 25, 1953

NUTRITION

More Milk Makes Children More Lively

► THREE BIG glasses of milk a day instead of one for children produces better work in school, more liveliness, a dramatic reduction in some vitamin deficiencies and other beneficial results.

About 150 Canadian children attending a boarding school were tested for vitamin deficiencies, weight levels and other factors back in 1948 and 1949. After that they received the triple doses of milk each day, three eight-ounce glasses. Then in 1950, 1951 and last year they were tested again.

Dramatic reductions in vitamin A and B deficiencies were reported by Dr. L. Bradley Pett of the Department of Health and Welfare in Ottawa to the American Insti-

tute of Nutrition meeting in Chicago. The level was about one-eighth that of the original tests in 1948 and 1949. In addition colds and other respiratory diseases, infected tonsils and various minor illnesses declined, and general weight levels improved.

Dr. Pett said that unmeasurable benefits included more energy for recreation, better work in school and greater liveliness. There was no improvement in hemoglobin, ascorbic acid, nutrition or protein levels, all of which were average to start with.

Cost of the triple doses of milk was only doubled because some skim milk powder was used.

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