

PSYCHOLOGY

Test Picks Schizophrenics

Modification of Rorschach ink blot test allows spotting of a certain type of schizophrenic patient, very difficult otherwise to identify, a psychologist has discovered.

► A CERTAIN type of schizophrenic patient, very difficult to distinguish from those who are merely neurotic, can now be picked out by the doctor with the use of an objective mental test. This was reported by Dr. Zigmunt A. Piotrowski of the New York State Psychiatric Institute at a meeting of the American Orthopsychiatric Association in New York.

The group picked out by the test are those whose capacity for energy control is out of all proportion to their energy output. Mostly their control is much greater than necessary. They "overdo in not doing," Dr. Piotrowski said.

They seem to be living under the shadow of a great fear, Dr. Piotrowski explained. "And I believe they have good reason to be afraid," he added. Like many more normal persons, they are afraid to do anything for fear they will do something wrong.

The honor student who suddenly loses all interest in his studies and no longer cares about making good grades may be in this class of schizophrenic patients. From 25% to 30% of all schizophrenics are in the group.

The reason it is difficult for the physician to tell this kind of patient from the much less seriously ill neurotic is because the patient may refrain from any absurd behavior, and he may have symptoms like those of the obsessive-compulsive neurotic, such as repeated hand-washing movements.

However, because the proper treatment for a neurosis would be very harmful for him, it is most important for the doctor to know if his patient is schizophrenic.

This kind of schizophrenic is usually a very superior person with unusually high intelligence. He may be at the top of his class in school or college. In the early stages when proper treatment would be effective, he is not deteriorated.

The psychological test that serves to spot this type of patient is a modification of the Rorschach ink blot test prepared by Dr. Piotrowski. The seriously ill patients are shown up on the test by a peculiar vagueness in their responses.

"It is as though they are lost in an intellectual fog," Dr. Piotrowski explained.

These patients do not respond to the electric shock or other shock treatments, he said. They should be treated with appropriate psychotherapy. They should be given limited insight into their condition, but the physician cannot afford to be too frank with them. If he tells them how seriously ill they are, they will be even more frightened. If they are so ill that, in spite of doing their utmost to avoid mistakes, they still make them, then the outlook for them is very bad.

Dr. Piotrowski has been following up the progress of such patients for a period of seven and a half years, he told the meeting.

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MEDICINE

Stop Pain of Shingles

► CORTISONE, FAMOUS as an arthritis remedy, brought "dramatic relief of pain" within 24 to 36 hours in four out of five patients suffering from severe attacks of shingles, Dr. Maxwell L. Gelfand of New York reports in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (March 13).

The skin blisters healed in the usual manner, in one to three weeks. But although all the patients had extensive and severe involvement, all felt so well under cortisone treatment that they were able to continue their usual work. Their ages ranged from 32 to 74 years, with four of them over 50. Dr. Gelfand points out that shingles, or herpes zoster as it is called medically, is usually more severe in the older age groups.

This is believed to be the first report of the use of cortisone for shingles itself, though it has been tried for the eye complications that sometimes follow shingles.

The cortisone treatment not only brought fast relief of pain but, Dr. Gelfand thinks, helped to ward off the neuralgia that is often a long-lasting and very painful complication of severe shingles. None of the patients he treated had this neuralgia. Eye complications in one patient cleared rapidly under the cortisone treatment.

The patient who was not helped much, though the eye complications were somewhat improved, also had chronic lymphatic leukemia.

Cortisone is not a cure for shingles, Dr. Gelfand points out. Shingles is an acute infectious disease due to a virus. It is, aside from the complications that may come, a benign disease that runs its course. Cortisone, according to Dr. Gelfand, suppresses the inflammation and pain of the disease, while the infection runs its course.

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• RADIO

Saturday, March 27, 1954, 3:15-3:30 p.m. EST
"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over the CBS Radio Network. Check your local CBS Station.

Mrs. T. Forest St. Hilaire, clinical psychologist of the District of Columbia Society for Crippled Children, will discuss "The Science of the Easter Seal."

BIOLOGY

Bats in Cornell Basement Studied in Hibernation

► CORNELL UNIVERSITY has bats in its basement. But strictly for scientific purposes.

Prof. William A. Wimsatt is conducting a series of experiments on body changes in the animals during their hibernating period. In the winter sleep, bats live in dark dens at a comfortable 40 to 42 degrees Fahrenheit, requiring only drinking water.

During the period of suspended animation, the bat's heart slows down from 180 beats a minute to only two or three. Its temperature drops from about 100 to the 40 degrees of its den.

Bats draw on their fat reserves and an extra supply of glycogen in the liver to live during the winter. Prof. Wimsatt wants to know how the animal changes its metabolism to use this food.

One of the most unusual features of bat life is the delayed fertilization of female eggs. Mating takes place in the fall before hibernation, but fertilization does not occur until spring. In between, the sperm are kept alive in the female womb.

Since the animals mate occasionally during hibernation, some observers have suggested that the autumn mating produces no offspring. Prof. Wimsatt has found that females isolated from males all winter still produce baby bats in the spring.

Relatively little is known about hibernation, Prof. Wimsatt explains. The Cornell scientists hope the bats in the zoology building basement will answer some of the questions about the fascinating winter sleep.

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MEDICINE

Butterscotch Flavor For Child's Penicillin

► IF THE doctor wants to give Junior penicillin by mouth instead of by injection, or "shots," he can now prescribe a liquid brand that is flavored with butterscotch. While especially likely to please the children, this new penicillin can be given to grown-ups, too.

Besides the greater convenience, giving penicillin by mouth is said to lower the number of hypersensitivity, or allergy, reactions to the famous mold remedy. The butterscotch-flavored job is now being distributed by Parke, Davis & Company, Detroit, who give it the brand name, Penasoid Suspension.

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