

MEDICINE

Test for Pre-Diabetics

► A SIX-MINUTE test that will tell which members of a diabetic's family are ultimately destined to get diabetes themselves has been announced by Dr. George E. Anderson of the State University of New York College of Medicine, New York.

The test is made by injecting a small dose, three units, of a special insulin into the veins. Blood sugar determinations are then made after two, four and six minutes. The results divide most diabetics into two distinctive categories. One group is made up of those sensitive, or responsive, to insulin. The other is made up of those insensitive to insulin.

The test thus becomes a good "yardstick" for measuring improvement in the diabetic patient and showing which ones need higher doses of insulin. Dr. Anderson states in *Science* (April 16) that this test is better for this purpose than "casual" blood sugar determinations.

When giving the test to 50 non-diabetic persons, he found that some very fat persons, although other tests did not show them to have diabetes, nevertheless were not responsive to the special insulin in the six-minute test.

This defective response to insulin, Dr. Anderson thinks, must result in a decreased insulin-efficiency and in increased production demand on the body for insulin. Since

the obesity, or fatness, by itself imposes supernatural demands for insulin, such strained production-demand might be expected to result in "bankruptcy" of the body's insulin-producing mechanism.

The very fat person who develops diabetes usually suffers chiefly from a "relative" insufficiency of insulin, rather than from intrinsic inability of the body to produce insulin. This deficiency is relative to the exorbitant demands for insulin which the body cannot adequately meet.

Many diabetics give a history of having been very fat. But strikingly few non-diabetic very fat people actually develop diabetes, in spite of the increased demand for insulin made by their fatness. Which of the non-diabetic fat persons have a defective ability to respond to insulin might be told by the six-minute test before the diabetes develops, Dr. Anderson thinks.

The special insulin he uses is one free of a substance called the glucagon factor. An English scientist almost 20 years ago reported that diabetics could be classed as sensitive or insensitive to insulin. Canadian and U. S. workers were not able to confirm this. The reason, Dr. Anderson thinks, is that the commercial insulins in the United States and Canada were not free of this glucagon factor.

Science News Letter, May 1, 1954

GENERAL SCIENCE

"Red Baiting" Dismays

► THE THREAT against university professors by Congressional investigating committees is regarded in England "not only with dismay but with bewilderment," Dr. James Drever, professor of psychology at the University of Edinburgh, comments in the *Journal of Social Issues* (No. 3, 1953).

The vice-chancellors of British universities gathered last summer to discuss "the danger of interference by the state with properly academic affairs." However, they did not even consider questions involving members of their staffs or their political

affiliations. That kind of threat seemed to them so very remote as not to merit consideration.

What they did consider was that, since English universities all receive more than half their incomes from the government, there might be some future attempt to influence policy or to guide research along certain lines. It was the view of those attending that this possibility was certainly not imminent, and probably would never arise.

In England, the dismissal of an individual college professor simply could not occur, Dr. Drever explained.

"A professor is appointed aut vitam aut culpam, which means in effect that so long as he performs his statutory duties and commits no serious crime he cannot be removed from office," Dr. Drever said. "There is no individual or committee, local or national, upon whose goodwill his job depends."

The secure relationship between government and university might not work in a larger country, Dr. Drever admitted.

"It depends ultimately upon the fact that the individuals concerned know and trust one another," he said.

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Questions

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TECHNOLOGY

Luxembourg Rebuilding Broadcasting Station

► RADIO BROADCASTING facilities in Luxembourg are being extended through construction of two 920-foot towers that will beam programs into Paris with a power of 500,000 watts.

Now being rebuilt by the Telefunken-Works of Hanover, Germany, the station presently operates at 250,000 watts. The two tall towers will be spaced about 1,000 feet apart to produce best performance, according to experiments on a scale model. The maximum power of any commercial U. S. station is 50,000 watts.

The finished station, which will handle live, network, recorded and taped broadcasts, will be the most modern in Europe.

Science News Letter, May 1, 1954

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