

PSYCHOLOGY

Test for Mentally Ill

► PSYCHOLOGISTS now have a test to help tell how well a mentally ill person will respond to psychiatric treatment.

The test, now being used successfully in some 50 clinics, helps the psychiatrist pick out patients who will probably benefit most from treatment. It also spots personality defects, and it may give psychiatrists clues to the best treatment approach.

In addition, the test identifies the constructive forces at work in a healthy individual's personality.

The test, reported at a meeting of the American Psychological Association in San Francisco by Dr. Frank X. Barron, associate research psychologist at the University of California's Institute of Personality Assessment, measures "ego strength." Ego strength is something like "horse sense."

A person with a lot of ego strength, says Dr. Barron, is usually in good physical health, has a strong sense of reality, has a lot of self-confidence and vitality, is broad minded, enjoys people and is reasonably intelligent.

These qualities of ego strength may be strong in psychoneurotics. Often they are

not recognizable, because the mental distress masks the underlying personality strength. Dr. Barron's test identifies those latent qualities of ego strength that will gradually emerge through psychotherapy.

Those high on ego strength have proved to be patients with a high probability of improvement through psychotherapy.

Dr. Barron developed the test by comparing pre-treatment answers to the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory from groups of patients who had improved with those who had not improved. He found that 68 questions were significant in separating the two groups. These questions form his test.

One group tested were infantrymen fighting in the front lines in Korea in 1953. About 40% of men in battle will not return fire. Dr. Barron's test was successful in distinguishing these men—the non-fighters—from those who would shoot back when fired upon.

The non-fighter's principal deficiency is apparently ego strength, the psychologist said.

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ENTOMOLOGY

Farm Crops Damaged

► DAMAGE to farm crops this year is climbing into the millions of dollars, as three major insect pests seem to compete for first place in the amount of destruction they cause.

Leading a long list of damaging pests, grasshoppers, European corn borers and boll weevils appear to be causing the nation's farmers the greatest losses at present, according to a U. S. Department of Agriculture report on insect pest conditions.

Corn-growing sections of eastern Nebraska are plagued with the greatest numbers of grasshoppers in three years, while rangeland in the western part of the state is showing heavy infestation.

The insects are considerably above their 1954 levels in Minnesota and in Wisconsin large populations are building up, causing serious damage to corn and sugar beets. Tests in some Illinois fields show up to 50 grasshoppers per square yard.

The first generation of European corn borers have already done most of their damage across the nation, and now the second generation is showing up for another bite out of the corn crop. Kansas, South Dakota, Minnesota and Illinois all report egg-laying by the corn borer moth or emergence of the voracious caterpillars.

In many instances, the second generation of corn borers in a season causes more destruction than the first, appearing as the corn reaches maturity.

Boll weevils continue to cause damage in eastern Texas, and in Oklahoma they are

moving into cotton fields that have stayed free from the pest so far this year. Tests in several Louisiana parishes showed up to 80% of the cotton to be infested in many fields.

Boll weevil damage remains high in South Carolina and Mississippi. As the weevil's numbers increase in Arkansas cotton, the pest is expected to migrate into new fields.

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FORESTRY

Northeast's Sugar Maples Hit by Fungus Disease

► TRADITIONALISTS who demand pure maple syrup for their hot cakes may have rough days ahead.

Sugar maples along the New England coast have been found wilting and dying. An incurable fungus disease is suspected as the cause.

Sickly maples found in New Hampshire show symptoms of the disease, bleeding canker, Drs. John R. Hansbrough of the U. S. Forest Service and Alma M. Waterman of the Forest and Insect Disease Laboratory at New Haven, Conn., report, but they are awaiting results of laboratory tests before indicting the fungus.

Ridding an area of bleeding canker fungus may be a frustrating job. The fungus is carried about in the soil by moisture, and it lives throughout the system of

the tree it attacks. Cutting out diseased portions of the tree does not help. Cutting down infected trees does little good either since the fungus can live on and spread in the soil.

The disease shows up on a tree as dark brown, watery spots on the bark, from a half-inch to several inches in size. Vertical cracks, several feet long, may appear in the bark.

When the water spots are punctured, a reddish brown fluid oozes out. Under the spots, the wood is reddish brown with an orange-green margin around the area.

Maples under ten inches in diameter seem to be the most susceptible victims.

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