

PSYCHOLOGY

Technology Affects Family

► MODERN TECHNOLOGY is seriously affecting the mutual life of families today in "three areas of significant impact," Dr. Joost A. M. Meerloo, New York psychologist and psychiatrist, said.

He called for an awareness of these encroachments "on our happiness and peace of mind" in order to "maintain peace and understanding within the family, the basic unit and nucleus of all social harmony."

In a talk at the North Shore Hospital, Chicago, on emotional forces in the family, he said the disrupting factors include the "technical invasion," the "invasion by psychological concepts," and the "invasion by the confusing semantics of love."

The technical invasion Dr. Meerloo describes as the coercive action of the new means of communications, such as television, leading to an unobtrusive change in family relations. One illustration of this is television apathy, the unwillingness of the child to have personal relations other than with the "spell-binding, fascinating TV screen." Dr. Meerloo said he had seen children between four and six years of age who could communicate with the TV screen but not with their parents.

A change in the dinner pattern is another example of the intrusion of the technical age, a modern household being dominated by schedules of every member of the family. Buses, schools, commuter trains also inter-

fere with the quiet breakfast gathering of the family, especially when the mother also has an outside job.

The "invasion by psychological concepts" results from the lack of reserve and privacy coming from misunderstood popularization of psychological concepts and the way persons use "psychologizing" in an aggressive way.

The "invasion by the confusing semantics clinically illustrated by the overemphasis on sexual orgasm, the misjudgment of marital jealousy and a lack of mutual commitment.

The "invasion by the confusing semantics of love," according to Dr. Meerloo, "calls attention to the precocious imprints on sensitive minds of over-glamorized concepts of eternal love, leading to confusion of marital attitudes, lack of loving tolerance and difficulties in mutual adjustment."

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SURGERY

Cost and Number of Operations Increase

► THE NUMBER of surgical operations performed in the United States is increasing, and so is the cost.

The increase in frequency of surgery is attributed to the increased knowledge of the nature of surgical expense insurance and

the availability of its benefits; broadened coverage in the policies themselves, and improvements in surgery and the development of new surgical techniques, Morton D. Miller, vice-president of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, reported.

A new survey of group surgical claims, made in 1957, has been compared with a similar survey of 1947 and presented at the meeting of the Society of Actuaries in New York.

The increased attention to cancer prevention and diagnosis has resulted in more surgery with respect to benign tumors, cysts, skin suturing and body cavity examinations. In addition, the development of heart operations since the 1947 study has increased the total.

On the other hand, substantial reductions in tonsillectomies, appendectomies and hysterectomies have occurred within the past decade, Mr. Miller said.

Surgical charges have shot up 26% in the ten-year span studied. Highest charges in the recent report were found in Pacific coast states. Obstetrical charges on the Coast were 40% over the national average while non-obstetrical were 21% higher than the national average.

Among metropolitan areas, New York City led all others with a 54% increase over the national average for obstetrical and 48% for non-obstetrical charges, but Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, D. C., and Chicago followed closely.

Group surgical expense insurance on Jan. 1 of this year covered 50,000,000 persons through some 200 companies. More than 109,000,000 persons are covered by some type of surgical and obstetrical insurance for doctor's charges.

The survey of 1957 covered more than 150,000 claims, selected on a sampling basis from the files of ten life insurance companies that underwrite two-thirds of group surgical expense insurance in the U. S.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Most U. S. Residents Have Hospital Nearby

► MOST residents of the United States have ready access to a nearby hospital.

The number of persons to whom hospital services are not easily available has dropped from 10,000,000 to 2,800,000 since 1948, the U. S. Public Health Service reports. Even in the most rural areas, only a small percentage of the population is now without nearby hospital facilities.

This and other evidences of progress in Hospital planning and construction are indicated in a publication, "The Nation's Health Facilities—Ten Years of the Hill-Burton Hospital and Medical Facilities Program, 1946-1956," issued by the Public Health Service. The report includes a summary of the program to Jan. 1, 1958.

During the first ten years 3,047 projects were approved for construction, including general hospitals, nursing homes, treatment centers and laboratories. Of the total cost of \$2,500,000,000, the state and local share was about \$1,700,000,000, the rest being provided by the Federal Government.

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FLYING "ROAD MAP"—A cockpit chart with automatic stylus marks a helicopter's position over the East River, New York City, in a demonstration of a new electronic navigation aid by Capt. Irwin J. Kersey, deputy program manager for the Airways Modernization Board. The precise navigational system, called the Bendix-Decca Navigator, was developed by Bendix Aviation Corporation. "Air lines" similar to roads are automatically drawn on electronically controlled maps. Radio stations transmit the direction "lines" displayed on the chart.