

PSYCHIATRY

Test Emotional Flexibility

Five questions which test the strength of social taboos on the unconscious mind form a new "psychopenetration" approach to mental patients.

► DO YOU unconsciously want attention from everybody and everything all the time? Do you unconsciously have sexual feelings toward everybody and everything all the time?

These are two of the five questions in a new "psychopenetration" method of testing and treating mental patients reported by Dr. Paul H. Wilcox, of the Traverse City, Mich., State Hospital, at the closing session of the American Psychiatric Association in Montreal.

The third question is: Do you unconsciously want to kill everybody and everything all the time? Four: Do you unconsciously want to show all your feelings to everybody all the time? Five: Do you unconsciously want to deceive everybody all the time?

You may feel like answering all of these with a stout No. There are words and ideas in those questions that our society puts a taboo on. But a person with sufficient freedom from an overwhelming taboo feeling can answer Yes to one or more of the questions for his unconscious mind, even though the answer is No for his conscious mind. Such a person has "emotional flexibility," Dr. Wilcox stated.

If you think you can guess how different people would answer these questions, you are mistaken.

"It is not possible to guess from general conversation or behavior what an individual's response to these questions will be," Dr. Wilcox declared.

To his surprise, confused patients with hallucinations often "come through with a clear answer to these questions."

The patient who is unable to answer Yes to any of these questions is emotionally rigid. If only very irrelevant answers are given, it is a sign of very serious disorganization of thinking in a person above the level of an imbecile.

A Yes answer does not imply a full appreciation of the meaning of the questions, Dr. Wilcox stated. But as time goes on, and the questions are repeated, their significance tends to grow on a person. Most persons will show various degrees of resistance to some of the questions.

Dr. Wilcox combines the questions with carbon dioxide-induced states of coma, or unconsciousness, and with electroshock convulsions and electrically induced coma without convulsions.

From the way the patients answer the questions and the way they react to the carbon dioxide coma, Dr. Wilcox puts them into six classes. When answers to

the questions show emotional flexibility and reactions to carbon dioxide coma are mild, the person belongs in class I.

This in most cases is a "dynamically normal response." Such persons can utilize their everyday life experiences effectively. However, Dr. Wilcox reported, clinical

symptoms of depression may occur in persons giving a class I response. In such cases, the carbon dioxide treatment will have no effect on the depression but electroshock convulsions are very efficient.

A large proportion of the population belongs in class II, Dr. Wilcox stated. In this class fall those who show emotional flexibility in response to the questions but who show tensions under carbon dioxide coma. This reaction is typical of most of the psychoneurotic and psychosomatic patients, the ones whose mothers-in-law may drive them into stomach ulcers, and the like. In people with no clinical symptoms a class II response probably is a sign of incipient neurosis.

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Draw-A-Person Test

► A NEW test to help diagnose mental illness was announced by Dr. Renatus Hartogs of the Allan Memorial Institute of Psychiatry, Montreal, at the meeting there of the American Psychiatric Association.

Draw-A-Person is the name of the new test.

The name describes the test. All the patient does is draw a person. Artistic talent and training are not necessary. In fact, the less a patient has had of these, the better for the test, Dr. Hartogs said.

From the drawing, quickly made during a psychiatric interview, the doctor can tell much about the kind of anxiety the patient is suffering. Anxiety, he explained, is a kind of alarm mechanism to preserve the wholeness of the personality, in the face of a threat or danger that might cause a person to fall apart, or, as psychiatrists put it, might cause personality disintegration. Anxiety is mobilized and induces formation of defenses against the danger.

When a patient draws a person, his idea of how his own body looks and its



TRACK-TREAD LANDING GEAR—Mounted on a Boeing B-50 Superfortress, this installation is the largest of its type ever built and will be used in testing the practicality of flying heavy airplanes from unimproved airfields.