

PSYCHOLOGY

Thalidomide Babies' Care

► THALIDOMIDE BABIES cannot be forgotten, but the word thalidomide should not be used to stigmatize them as they grow up. Already they are being integrated into the broad group of "handicapped" children. As far as is known, their intelligence is not affected.

The Canadian Medical Association Journal, 88:959, 1963, calls attention to the future of these congenitally malformed children and their parents. Less than 100 thalidomide babies have been born in Canada; less than 20 in the U. S.

"Habilitation" is the word used in connection with discussions of prosthetics, surgery, pediatric, psychiatric, psychological, medical and social aspects of treatment.

The principles of care do not differ, except in detail, from any other program for the handicapped, members of the Expert Committee on the Habilitation of Congenital Anomalies Associated with Thalidomide point out. Treatment of the limbs must begin at an early age, within the first three months.

In Germany, where large numbers of the 3,000 to 4,000 affected babies are being treated, the largest group is made up of those with deformed arms but normal legs. In the next largest group, however, both legs and arms are involved.

Dr. John E. Hall of the department of surgery, University of Toronto, said eight of the 11 cases he had seen have had all four limbs affected. Dr. Hall emphasizes

that although some surgery may be justified, haste should be avoided in "removing any structure which has purposeful movement," since it may be useful with a prosthetic device.

The mothers of these babies are likely to blame themselves for taking thalidomide, Dr. Denis Lazure, assistant professor of psychiatry, University of Montreal, stated. Such women were already struggling with an exaggerated degree of anxiety when they took the sleeping pill. In many cases a psychiatrist will be needed.

In Germany, Dr. Lazure points out, most parents want to keep the child at home.

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SOCIOLOGY

Ingredients of Crime Same Around the World

► THE BASIC INGREDIENTS that make criminals in Africa and the South Sea Islands may make criminals in the U. S.

Societies with high crime rates may differ in their ways of life, but they have certain features in common. These features, Yale University investigators have found, are associated with crime and may be causes of crime.

In examining 48 "primitive" societies from all areas of the globe they found that a high rate of theft and personal crime exists where young boys have little opportunity for contact with their fathers. Home and family life centers about their mothers, who feed them, nurse them, clothe them and share their beds with them. The boys rarely see their fathers, for the older men spend most of their time in the company of other men or their other wives.

Crime in these mother-centered societies, the investigators explained, is an expression of revolt against femininity. For the boys, it is an attempt to become masculine. Since they do not have a father to imitate, they are virtually forced to turn against their mothers' standards of goodness in order to feel masculine.

Theft alone, the investigators found, is associated with societies that have harsh child-rearing practices for youngsters and strong class distinctions for adults. In such societies, they explained, stealing others' property—whether the thing of value is a jewel, a fur or a ritual song—is a way to fulfill needs for security and indulgence that the society has thwarted.

Where assault, murder, intent to injure through sorcery and other types of personal crime are common, the investigators found a general attitude of suspicion and mistrust of the world. These attitudes were shown in child-rearing practices and in folk tales.

This research, using a "cross-cultural" method, supports many crime studies done in the United States. Drs. Margaret K. Bacon, Irvin L. Child and Herbert Barry III reported in the Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 66:291, 1963.

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PSYCHIATRY

Fear of Harm Brings on Mental Hospitalization

► A PATIENT gets sent to a mental hospital not because he is "sick" but because he is a "threat" to his family, neighbors or community.

The idea that a patient should have treatment for mental illness is rarely important, investigators reported to the 119th annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in St. Louis, Mo.

The "last straw," the incident that brings on a request to hospitalize the disturbing person, is not a delusion or hallucination. Such symptomatic behavior, useful to a doctor diagnosing the illness, not offensive to the community and does not lead to hospitalization, they said.

Threats to attack mother or child, however, bring prompt action. Fear, rather than actual harm to any individual or property, often leads to a request for hospitalization, studies of 100 schizophrenic patients show.

In most cases, the "last straw" takes place within the home, before neighbors or police get involved with the problem and bring embarrassment to the family. However, the investigators said, the community will not tolerate nudity, shouting, arson, or refusal to talk. Dr. Muriel W. Pumphrey, and Julian C. Hall, research social workers, and Dr. Kathleen Smith, all of the Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, Mo., said no specific "last straw" is associated with a particular age, sex, or race.

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PSYCHIATRY

35-Hour Week Success For Mentally Upset

► A 35-HOUR work week for mentally ill patients is in the offing.

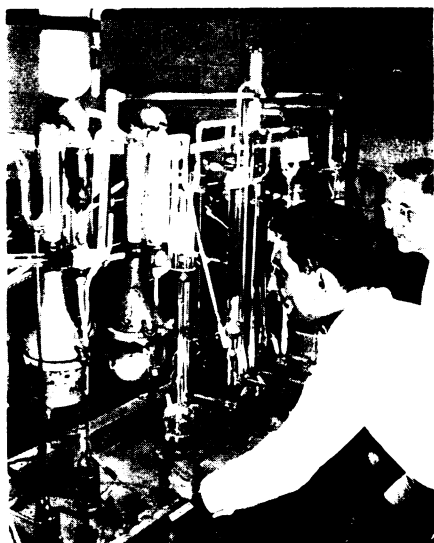
Hospital care from nine to four—with evenings and weekends at home—is a successful approach to treatment of the acutely ill, an Albert Einstein Medical College study has shown.

Of 200 patients, chosen at random from hospital admissions for the day care plan, more than two-thirds were successfully treated. Many were able to return to normal activities after only a month or two of full-time treatment. After discharge, the patient and his family solidify these gains by returning to the center for weekly consultations.

Drs. Israel Zwerling and Jack Wilder said there are marked differences in the progress of patients at the day hospital and those under traditional 24-hour care. From a study now underway, they have found the day-care patients make fewer attempts to mutilate themselves and injure personnel. The patients are often able to return to normal living sooner than the 24-hour care patients.

The success of the "work week" approach to treatment of the mentally ill backs up the current trend to small, community-oriented therapeutic centers, the investigators told the 119th annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in St. Louis, Mo.

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National Research Corporation

GAS ANALYZER—Andre Huart of the French Atomic Energy Commission observes the vacuum fusion gas analyzer used to determine impurities in alloys and metals at the National Research Corporation, Cambridge, Mass., with Joseph Martin, supervisor of the laboratory facilities. The vacuum fusion gas analyzer can detect less than one part per million gaseous impurities in metals.