

PSYCHIATRY

Physicians Believe Cause of Schizophrenia is Found

Disturbances of Circulation, Oxygen Consumption, And Heat Regulation Point to Affected Hypothalamus

DISTURBANCE of part of the fore-brain called the hypothalamus is responsible for many of the symptoms of schizophrenia, Drs. Isidore Finkelman and Daniel Haffron, of Elgin, Ill., State Hospital, believe as a result of studies they reported to the American Psychiatric Association meeting in St. Louis. Patients suffering from schizophrenia are for the most part out of touch with their surroundings, living in a world of their own. Their body processes go on at a slower tempo than in normal persons. Less blood circulates through their veins and they consume less oxygen. Their mechanism for heat regulation is defective and they do not show any sign of emotion.

The hypothalamus is concerned with emotional expression and in this part of the brain also are located centers for regulating oxygen consumption, heat control and water balance. Since these mechanisms are out of order in schizophrenia, Drs. Finkelman and Haffron conclude that disturbance of the hypothalamus is a primary factor in the disease.

Old Age Changes Brain

The mental deterioration of old age is partly due to changes in the brain that take place with increasing age. Another important cause of this mental deterioration, called senility, is the difficulty old people have in adjusting to the

changes in their lives as well as to the physical changes in their brains and bodies, Dr. David Rothschild of Foxborough, Mass., State Hospital pointed out.

A man who has worked hard every day for forty years or more finds it difficult to be inactive. Loss of old friends and relatives and physical infirmities and weakness are hard to compensate for. Some old persons can find pleasure in new interests and friends and in less strenuous activities. Such persons do not develop senility, even though they may have the same physical changes in their brain tissues as patients showing signs of mental deterioration. But other old men and women find the adjustment to changed ways of living and to the physical changes in the brain too much to cope with and they develop the senile mental disease.

Psychic Anesthetic

Ten minutes' reassuring talk by the physician or surgeon—a psychic anesthetic—can take the place of a "shot" of morphine in quieting a patient before surgical operation and easing his pain and discomfort after the operation, Dr. Thomas J. Heldt of The Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, told the meeting.

The use of opiates before and after operations is a surgical habit rather than a necessity, Dr. Heldt declared.

Mental distraction is the most potent pain-soothing remedy known. However, if the surgeon cannot conveniently use this psychic method to relieve his patients' pain, he can achieve the same results with drugs other than the habit-forming opiates and coca leaf derivatives. Dr. Heldt reported one hundred major operations performed with a new drug, novaldin, and certain modern sleeping potions substituting for the opiates usually given before and after the operations.

Novaldin has a long chemical name and is related to phenyl-hydrazine and amidopyrin. Before the operations sodium amytal was given and afterwards novaldin and doses of phenobarbital

were found sufficient to allay pain and restlessness. Dr. Heldt did not actually try the psychic method of relieving pain which he said would be sufficient.

Too Much Farm Work

Too much emphasis on farm activities and not enough of other types of occupational therapy is a fault found in some institutions for mental disease, Dr. George F. Inch of Ypsilanti, Mich., State Hospital charged at the meeting of the American Psychiatric Association. The occupational therapy plant must be used as a laboratory and not as a craft center, he declared. Occupational therapy and recreational therapy should be managed independently of each other, except for such coordination as the medical staff arranges.

Occupational therapy in a state hospital for mental disease has two objects: 1. To aid the patient to a complete recovery and return to society; 2. To help the patient make a better adjustment in the hospital if because of the nature of his ailment he is destined to spend the rest of his life in the institution. The patient's likes, dislikes, capabilities, insight and reactions and everything else possible about him should be known before a complete program of occupational therapy is arranged for him.

Prevent Suicides

Playing volley ball and similar games may prevent mentally sick persons from committing suicide, and croquet has proved a valuable remedy in at least one case of the serious mental disorder, dementia precox.

How such athletic activities ranging from baseball and swimming to setting-up exercises, enjoyed as healthy recreation by well persons, can be valuable remedies in treating mentally sick persons, was demonstrated by Dr. D. D. Campbell, general manager of the Veterans Administration Facility at Perry Point, Md.

No suicides have been attempted in the group of patients at Perry Point since the program of physical activity has been started, Dr. Campbell reported. The games and activities turn the morbid, self-centered thoughts of the patient into pleasant channels. Acquiring skill at these games gives him a new feeling of self-confidence and raises his morale, especially when his new skill is recognized and admired by others. As one of the patients, who had been admitted to the hospital following an attempt at suicide, put it, "I have something to live for now."

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THE IDENTITY THEORY

By Blamey Stevens

Electro-magnetic Fields

Maxwell's electro-magnetic field laws state that the space variation of the electric field is equal to the time variation of the magnetic field, and *vice versa* that the time variation of the electric field is equal to the space variation of the magnetic field.

This relation is an expression of the only postulate of the Identity Theory, namely that except for differences in dimensions space is identical with time.

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