

The absorbent has been particularly useful for the stainless steel industry where any trace of moisture during annealing produces a bluish cast on the metal instead of the bright polish. Another important use is in the manufacture of toxic gases used in household refrigerators which cause corrosion if they contain moisture.

The use of activated alumina to decrease the humidity in the home for better summer comfort has only been partially explored as yet, said Mr. Derr. Mainly this has been because its uses have been developed first for drying equipment in existing or less competitive lines of development. Further, the absorption of moisture by the alumina generates a considerable amount of heat which must be removed; a technical problem somewhat difficult to solve in a home installation.

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MEDICINE

Alcohol, Ether, Exposure Lower Pneumonia Resistance

THE REASON why pneumonia is especially likely to follow exposure to cold, ether anesthesia and alcoholic indulgence or over-indulgence is explained in research reported by Drs. W. J. Nungester and Roy G. Klepser of the University of Michigan's Hygienic Laboratory at the meeting of the Society of American Bacteriologists.

These conditions interfere with the normal action of the epiglottis and the vocal folds in the throat, structures which ordinarily act like curtains, closing over the trachea at the slightest irritation. Since the trachea or windpipe is the passage from the throat to the lungs, it is obvious that failure of these protective curtains would leave the passage to the bronchi and lungs open to pneumonia germs in the air.

The Michigan scientists found that the protective mechanism in the throat failed three times as often in rats that had been exposed to cold as in rats under normal conditions, and more than twice as often in intoxicated rats as in normal ones.

When pneumonia germs were put into the rats' noses, nearly half the rats that had been exposed to cold got pneumonia but only just over a tenth of the rats living in normal temperatures developed the disease. Over a third of the intoxicated rats and over a third of the rats under ether anesthesia developed pneumonia.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Psychologists Puzzled Over Adaptability of Workers

Brain Waves Throw New Light on Sleep; Intelligence Influenced by Good Home; Social Life of Mice Watched

ABILITY of workers to adjust to difficult working conditions and increased demands with an economy that no man-made mechanical device can imitate, is a puzzle to psychologists, Dr. A. T. Poffenberger, of Columbia University, told the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in his address as vice-president of the section on psychology.

When men have to work in excessive noise or in a room extremely hot or filled with distractions, the output of work may not be decreased, experiments have demonstrated. It is likely to continue at the same level. In fact, in an unconscious attempt to maintain the level despite handicaps, the workers are inclined to overshoot the mark and do even better than usual.

Does work done in noisy surroundings or in excessive heat and humidity take its toll of human energy? Do incentives of all sorts commonly employed to increase effort and thereby to increase efficiency really increase efficiency, or are they more costly when efficiency is properly computed?

These are questions that psychologists recognize but are not yet ready to answer, Dr. Poffenberger indicated.

Each person recognizes his own level, Dr. Poffenberger said. "One thinks of himself as just so good." He also has an aspiration level that represents the achievements he would like to reach. These levels are constantly adjusted in the light of experience.

When difficulties are encountered or the task is unexpectedly made harder, the individual automatically makes an adjustment necessary to keep to his own level of performance and avoid disappointment. After a period of adjustment the output is normal and the effort apparently not increased.

The persons who make this adjustment report that they "are not bothered" or "paid no attention" to the distracting conditions.

Dr. Poffenberger cited two possible explanations. First, the sense organs and musculature may act as a protective

mechanism against distraction and by automatically relaxing they transmit the otherwise disturbing conditions at a reduced level, one too low for competition with the important ones. Second, the hammering at other sense organs may really increase or reinforce the intensity of signals carried by the senses actually employed at the task.

Men And Mice Alike

The rhetorical query, "Are we men or are we mice?" loses most of its significance through studies reported to the American Association by Dr. Jacob Uhrich, of the University of Chicago and Kansas State Teachers College. Dr. Uhrich has found that men and mice are very much alike in some phases of their social conduct.

Male mice fight a good deal, females don't. There is some bickering between the sexes. The severity of the fighting differs from group to group, and within the same group at different times.

There is a tendency for one "boss mouse" to establish dominance over the other males. His rule may last for several months, or he may be overthrown after only a few days.

Brain Waves Chart Sleep

Persons who claim they go to sleep the instant their heads touch the pillows must be wrong, it appears from brain-wave studies of sleep reported by Drs. Hallowell Davis, P. A. Davis, A. L. Loomis, E. N. Harvey and G. Hobart of Harvard Medical School, Princeton University, and the Loomis Laboratory.

Brain-wave studies made of individuals as they went to sleep and the reports of the sleepers themselves indicated that sleep does not come all at once. Different parts of the brain go to sleep in stages, one at a time, and there is a "floating" or drowsy stage before real sleep which shows up in brain-wave records as well as in the reports of the sleepers. This drowsy stage, incidentally, gives a brain-wave record so much like those found in abnormal mental states that the investigators warned that it must be avoided in using brain-wave