

New Drug for Mental Cases Eases Tension

Chlorpromazine, one of the new drugs hailed as an aid in the treatment of mental illness, was found to be of "limited, though definite, value" in an experiment at Agnews State Hospital.

The study was described before the California Medical Association scientific meeting yesterday by Dr. Robert A. Hall, an Agnews psychiatrist.

LESS OPTIMISTIC.

"I am less optimistic about it than some reports in popular magazines and scientific journals, but it definitely has a place in mental treatment," Dr. Hall said.

In a six month period the drug was given to ninety non-violent patients suffering from schizophrenia, while another eighty-five patients of the same type were studied as a "control" group.

"The beneficial effects of the drug were found to be proportionate to the amount of tension exhibited by the patient before treatment," Doctor Hall said, indicating it might work well on violent cases.

"There was no significant indication that the underlying disease process was favorably influenced."

He noted that 20 per cent of the control group, which did not get chlorpromazine, appeared to improve merely "as a result of many psychological factors, including suggestion, encouragement and interest by the staff."

NO ADJUNCT.

The study did not include psychotherapy as an adjunct to the drug.

Doctor Hall said about 40 per cent of the patients suffered side-effect which resembled the tremors of Parkinsonism.

Doctor H. V. Tavis, a psychiatrist at the Whittier Industrial School, told the meeting that organic brain damage may be of considerable significance in juvenile delinquency.

In a study of 255 boys at the

California Youth Authority institution, he found that 25 per cent had a history of brain injuries.

Doctor Travis said he has long been impressed by the frequency of severe head injuries with concussion, skull fracture and perior of unconsciousness among delinquents.

"Brain damage will intensify delinquency," he said. "Anything that limits the ability of the child to compete in his own age group will intensify a maladjustment."

TESTS NEGLECTED.

Dr. George N. Thompson, associated professor of psychiatry and neurology and the University of Southern California medical schools, said many psychiatrists today are neglecting neurological examinations.

"A brain tumor can cause a syndrome identical with those of schizophrenia, any psycho-neurosis, mental depression, alcoholism, psychopathic personality or any other mental disorder," he said.

"One of the most common mistakes is to diagnose an intracranial tumor as a functional disorder of the nervous system. The recent tendency to minimize the neurological examination is to be deplored."

Dr. Emil Selez, chief of neurosurgery at Cedars of Lebanon Hospital, warned that too many patients are dying because physicians fail to detect serious brain damage resulting from outwardly minor head injuries.