no sign of any definite physical lesion. There was no marked difference in the ratio of fragility between cases having drugs and those having none. As to the solubility of the red blood-cells in sodium taurocholate, out of 64 cases tested, 40 were approximately normal, while 24 showed increased solubility. In view of the findings of other observers as to the association between the characteristics of the red blood-cell and general metabolic disturbance, the high percentage of abnormal results indicates strongly the general association of mental disease with fundamental physiological changes throughout the organism.

C. S. R.


No abnormality in the results of the Van den Bergh test, the fasting blood-sugar, the lipase test or the indican test of the urine was found such as might suggest an autointoxication from metabolic disorder. In the depressed patients an increase of the non-protein nitrogen content of the blood was found, which might support the theory of Loney that there exists a relationship between certain toxic amines and melancholia.

C. S. R.

TREATMENT.


The giving of intravenous glucose was tried in schizophrenics who, when refusing food, became weak and suffered from circulatory collapse. In some tube-feeding had failed, in others it had not improved the physical condition. Glucose was given once or twice daily, three days being the longest consecutive course given, a sterile solution of 7.5 per cent. being given if the heart was fairly good, 10 per cent. in severe collapse, while in the latter cases 75 to 100 c.c. were given, while stronger patients received up to 300 c.c. at once. Cases with uncompensated heart lesions were not thus treated. In no case did any ill effects result either at once or subsequently.

Seven cases are described, all being cases of catatonic stupor or excitement. One acutely stuporous patient, given three injections, improved rapidly mentally and physically and was discharged within a month, while another of longer standing improved gradually after five injections given in two groups, and recovered in three months. This restless and confused patient showed a transient mental clearness for a few minutes after each injection. In the remaining cases improvement in pulse and circulation was a lasting result, negativism decreased and ordinary feeding was resumed though the mental condition showed little change.

The author concludes that the method is well worth using as a means of improving the circulatory condition and general nutrition in such cases, but
that it has no direct effect on the mental illness except possibly through improvement of the cerebral circulation. Any such effect is similar to that obtained with saline infusions and is very much less marked than those reported from cocaine injections in cases of stupor by various authors, to whose work references are given.

M. R. B.


Most mental patients have a greater chance of recovery when their physical condition is good, and it is believed that ultra-violet radiations will thus materially aid. In the County Mental Hospital, Stafford, the writer has given a thorough course of light-baths to all suitable new admissions and some previous but recent cases. The results to date are stated to be promising, with three exceptions. These are, agitated melancholias, acute maniacs and epileptics. These classes appear to become worse. The maniacs and patients presenting maniacal features become quieter during exposure, but immediately afterwards become more and more restless and noisy. Cases of epilepsy improve physically, but the fits are increased in number. Those so far treated over a period of one month show increases varying from 20 to 150 per cent. in the number of fits over the previous month. The physical condition of the precocious dement shows improvement from radiation, in particular the catatonic cyanosed cases. There is no concurrent mental amelioration, though some become more talkative and exhibit more body movement than before. Quiet delusional patients have shown little mental change, but the irritable type is more amenable. The large class of admissions comprising the simple melancholias, manic-depressives and confused cases appear to benefit from the radiation. No cases of general paralysis have so far been thus treated.

C. S. R.


Before the revolution neurotics in Russia were generally treated in private institutions and individual methods of psychotherapy needing the expenditure of time were applied. Russia is now giving most attention to preventive medicine, and in her present treatment of neurotics considers chiefly not the personal problems of the individual, but his fitting into the social scheme of the community.

Following the view of Dejerine and Gauckler, who suggested that the social factor is important for neurotics, and that for their treatment a most important element is the environment, which should include a considerable of recovering fellow-patients, and further that of Marzinowski, who emphasises the working out of a system of ideals and striving towards increased self-
mastery, the author describes how the problem of Russia has been tackled, where the stress of the past years has produced a large crop of neurotics, misfits of all social classes who now claim treatment from the public health service.

To cope with this situation the Commissariat of Health has created a system of institutions enabling a satisfactory classification of different types of case to be made, and giving to each type the environment and treatment most suitable. Patients suffering from real exhaustion, undernourishment, or physical weakness, can usually be rapidly cured by a sort of Weir-Mitchell treatment of bed and rest, with a little suggestion. A few specially severe cases are selected for individual prolonged psychotherapy, while for the mass of the more chronic and stubborn neurotics the essence of the treatment given depends upon sorting them into groups in whom definite ‘group-feeling’ can be created. This sorting out is done at the university clinic, where preliminary treatment is given. Then comes a sort of ‘mass-individualisation.’ In various sanatoria patients are brought together in groups having some degree of similarity in their symptoms; for each group activities are planned which tend to the formation of a ‘group-spirit’ and occupy the patients fully. Stress is laid upon community feeling, re-education by work and the pride of the group in its work, each patient being made to feel himself one of a group. Thus at every turn in his daily life his individual suggestibility is reinforced by the group suggestibility.

An atmosphere of health is aimed at: patients lacking self-control, with fits, outbursts of emotion and so forth, who might, as it were, infect a group, are isolated in sections where more intensive treatment and re-education can be given. In the other sections medical attention is given to the solving of individual conflicts at a definite treatment time, and outside this time talk about illness and symptoms is discouraged, no complaints being heard and no attention given to the illness, the patients being told at the start that while all necessary attention is being given to their treatment, they must look upon themselves and will be looked on as really not ill. All patients are expected to occupy themselves, handicrafts, gymnastics, eurhythmics, and special occupations being used, having regard to the needs of the group, and with the general aim of training the patients in the control of reflex and automatic movements in response to external stimuli, with special exercises adapted to special needs.

A general atmosphere of rivalry in attainment within the group and between groups is cultivated, health, self-control and the improvement of capabilities being the goal, the social outlook being widened as the patient approaches the transition to an independent life. Patients are encouraged to help one another, and a feeling of solidarity is reinforced by group suggestion, to be translated into a wider social environment on recovery. The author holds that this sort of psychological orthopaedics is proving a satisfactory solution of the problem before his country.

M. R. B.
TREATMENT

J Neurol Psychopathol 1927 s1-8: 75-77
doi: 10.1136/jnnp.s1-8.29.75

Updated information and services can be found at:
http://jnnp.bmj.com/content/s1-8/29/75.citation

Email alerting service

These include:
Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article. Sign up in the box at the top right corner of the online article.

Notes

To request permissions go to:
http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions

To order reprints go to:
http://journals.bmj.com/cgi/reprintform

To subscribe to BMJ go to:
http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/