

In all such cases a consultation with a colleague who specializes in psychiatry should be obtained, but this precaution is seldom taken. Mental hospitals are too often regarded as "depositories for lunatics" rather than as institutions in which mental therapy is practised.

M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

*Hæmatoporphyrin as a Therapeutic Agent in the Psychoses.* (*Amer. Journ. Psychiat.*, vol. *xiii*, p. 1158, May, 1934.) *Strecker, E. A., Palmer, H. P., and Braceland, F. J.*

Hæmatoporphyrin has a marked photo-sensitizing power when injected into the human body. It is stated to have been used as a therapeutic agent in the depressive psychoses. Thirty-seven patients were studied in the present investigation. Of 23 patients with manic-depressive reactions, 5 showed marked improvement, 6 showed moderate sustained improvement, and another 6 were generally benefited but the psychosis was not affected. Of 8 patients suffering from involuntional melancholia, 4 were markedly improved and only one failed to respond favourably. Definite stimulation and animation were evident in the schizophrenics treated, but the reaction was not of constructive character. It appears that the drug increases the available energy of the patient. "Photodyn" (hæmatoporphyrin hydrochloride) is the best mode of administration. The drug is given orally and intramuscularly.

M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

*Investigations of the Basal Metabolism in Schizophrenics: Effects of Thyroid Treatment.* (*Acta Psychiat. et Neurol.*, vol. *viii*, p. 573, 1933.) *Lingjaerde, O.*

One hundred and eighteen schizophrenics were investigated with Krogh's apparatus; 59 patients (50%) showed a basal metabolic rate between 90 and 112%, 43 (36.4%) between 80 and 89%, and 16 (13.6%) between 70 and 79%. Of the total number of cases 50% were below a B.M.R. of 90% and 34% below 85%. Cases in an "active" phase of the disease showed a decidedly low rate (70%), but if catatonic rigidity were present the values were relatively high. When the rigidity was abolished by an injection of hyoscine the oxygen consumption in one case fell from 132.5% to 96.6%. Forty-nine schizophrenics were treated with thyroid extract (1 tablet corresponding to 0.1 mgrm. thyroxin). The dosage varied from 3 to 6 tablets a day and the medication continued for several months. If any sign of improvement occurs the treatment should be continued for 6 to 12 months. In all except one case the B.M.R. increased. In 24 cases a considerable improvement or complete recovery was obtained. During the treatment the patients must be carefully watched (pulse-rate, basal metabolism, weight, glycosuria), and the necessity of giving an abundant supply of carbohydrate food is emphasized. Combination of thyroid medication with liver therapy is also recommended.

R. STRØM-OLSEN.

*Intravenous Injections of Hypertonic Solution of Magnesium for the Treatment of Migraine.* (*Comp. rend. Soc. Biol.*, vol. *cxv*, p. 534, 1934.) *Lumiere, A., and Meyer, P.*

Five c.c. of 50% magnesium sulphate solution in 1 c.c. instalments about one minute apart gave prompt relief. A transient increase in blood chlorides was produced and followed by diuresis and increased excretion of chlorides.

L. E. GILSON (Chem. Abstr.).

*The Use of Glycine in the Treatment of Myasthenia Gravis.* (*Ann. Int. Med.*, vol. *vii*, p. 948, 1934.) *Schmitt, E. O. G.*

There was clinical recovery in two cases. There was an increase in the elimination of creatinine and pre-formed creatinine N, and a decrease in creatine. The ration of creatine N to preformed creatinine N in the urine was decreased.

J. T. MYERS (Chem. Abstr.).