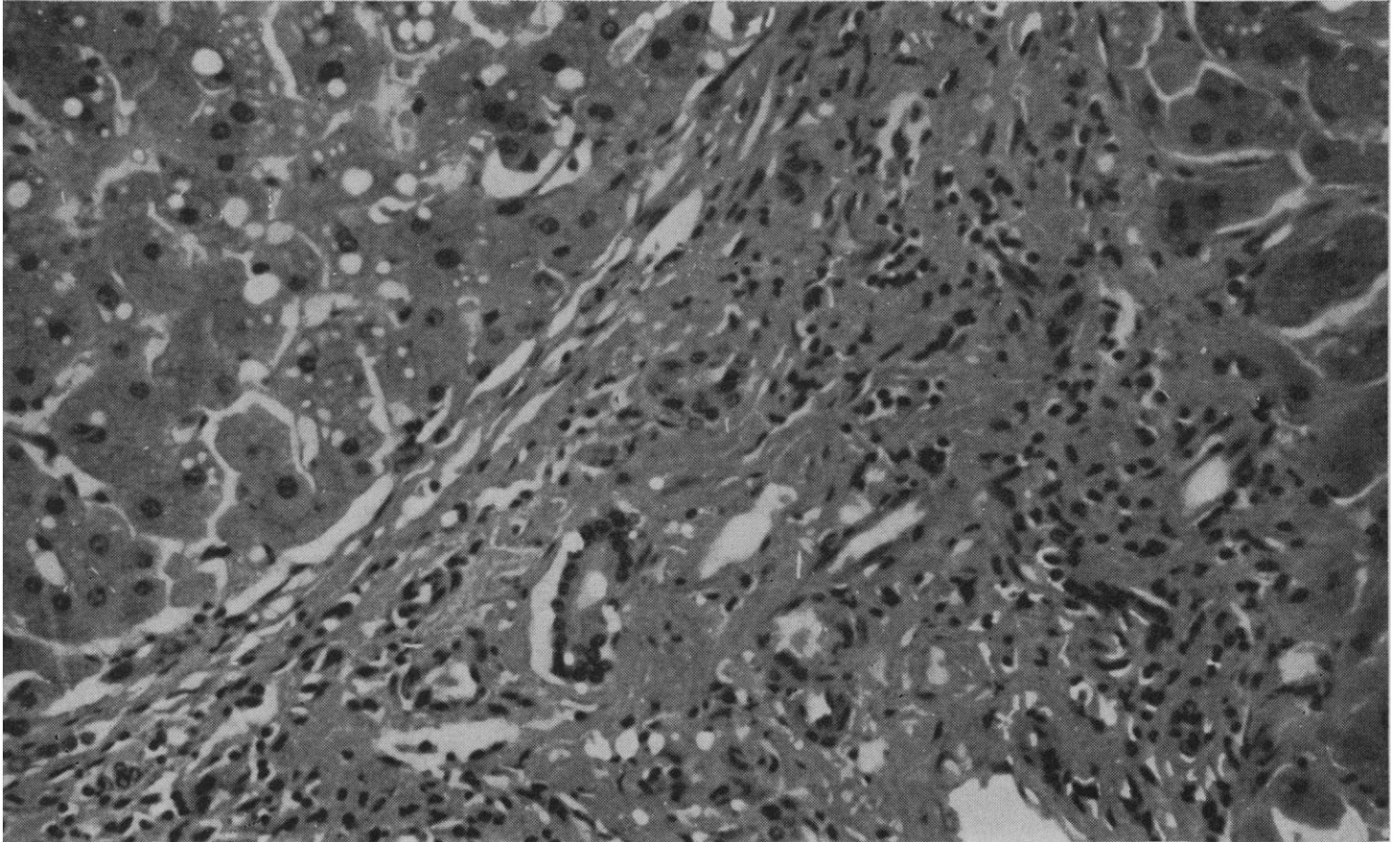


Alcoholism



Portal cirrhosis.

133rd AAAS Annual Meeting • 26-31 December 1966 • Washington, D. C.

A symposium on recent research in alcoholism will take place, 26-27 December 1966, at the 133rd AAAS Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. This symposium was developed under the auspices of the Committee on Research of the American Psychiatric Association. In many ways it is designed to complement a symposium on recent advances in biological and behavioral research in alcoholism held by Jack H. Mendelson at Harvard Medical School in June 1965. The proceedings of that conference have recently appeared in

print as a supplement to the journal, *Psychosomatic Medicine* (vol. 28, part 2, July-August 1966). The AAAS symposium emphasizes clinical research and will end with a status report on the National Institute of Mental Health's new National Center for Prevention and Control of Alcoholism.

A wide range of topics will be covered, extending from an overview of the relationship of problem drinking to liver abnormalities to a comparison of data collected on abstainers and heavy drinkers as part of a national

survey. Although these two groups differ in many ways, in some areas they resemble each other more than they do the intermediate group of social drinkers. Reports will be presented on an approach to the prevention of alcoholism, electroencephalographic studies of sleep disturbances during recovery from alcoholic psychoses and of the effects of Flagyl—a drug claimed to be useful in the treatment of alcoholism—and a detailed and provocative study of observed drinking patterns of chronic alcoholics studied in a research ward.

The patients must perform complex operant tasks to obtain beverage alcohol. In the latter study, altering the amount of effort required to obtain a unit of alcohol was found to substantially affect the amount of alcohol consumed. A review of work in Europe on a new drug, hemineurih, will be presented to inform American investigators of the current status of an interesting compound currently not being studied in this country.

Data from an extensive series of clinical studies carried out in the alcoholism treatment program at the Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York, will be utilized to describe both general prognostic factors in alcoholism and the nature of placebo response and of placebo responders in alcoholics receiving this treatment in a series of controlled clinical drug trials.

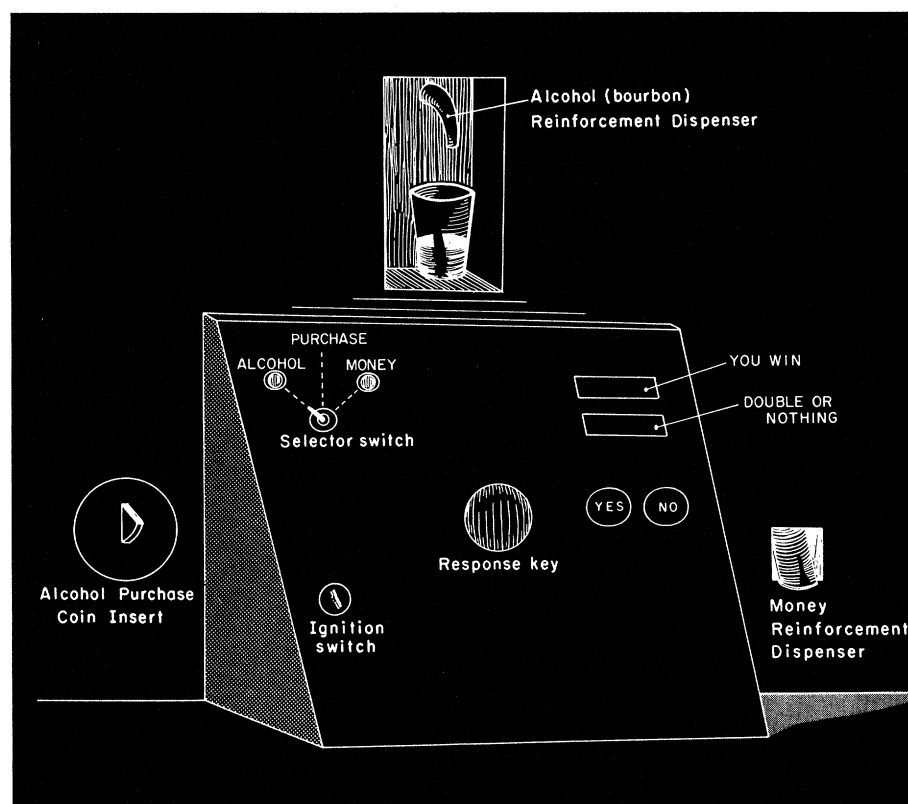
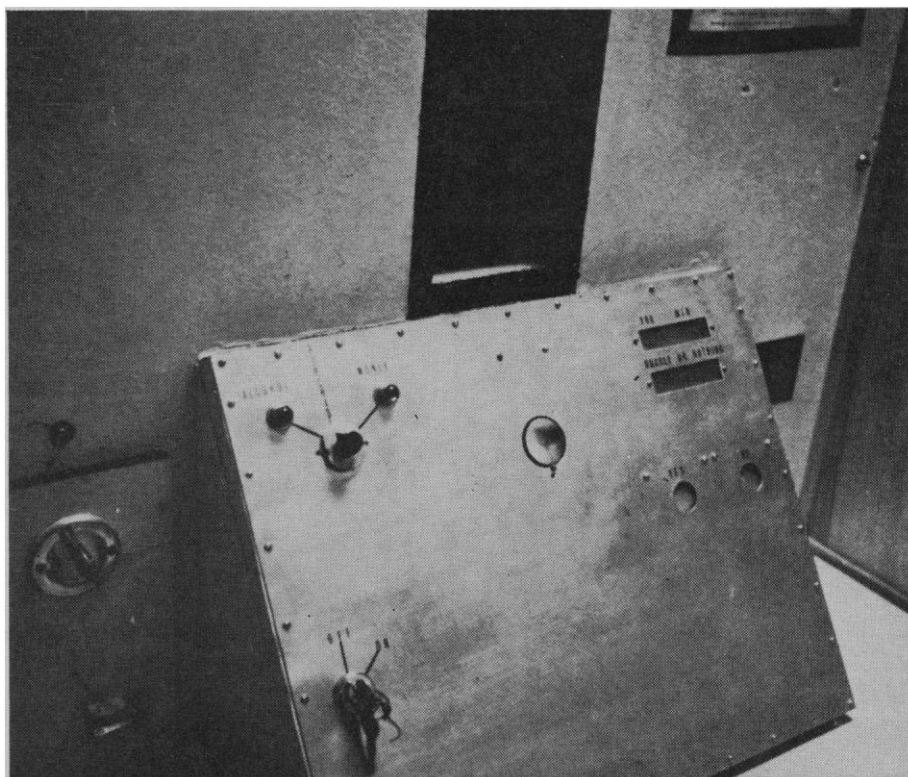
Two approaches to the group therapy of alcoholism, as inpatients and as outpatients, will be described, utilizing data collected at the Medical College of Virginia. A detailed follow-up study of a series of 378 alcoholic patients originally treated at the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Unit of the Spring Grove State Hospital in Maryland will also be presented and will complement the prognostic study carried out at the Downstate Medical Center.

The conference will provide reasonable coverage of a variety of treatment approaches to the chronic alcoholic and will amplify this with consideration of related material from the fields of the experimental analysis of behavior, prevention, liver damage, and electroencephalography. The conference as a whole should be of interest both to clinicians of several disciplines working with alcoholic patients and to investigators from a variety of scientific disciplines working in or considering working in this important public health area. Other groups indirectly involved with the problems discussed may find the meeting of substantial interest. The meeting should provide the basis for a broader perspective on the status of work in the field of alcoholism. Publication of the proceedings of this conference by the American Psychiatric Association in its Research Conference Series is anticipated.

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An operant instrument used for the study of drinking patterns of alcoholics. The subject's task was to press the response key in the center of the panel whenever a light appeared. After a fixed number of consecutive, accurate responses the subject had to choose whether to take the reinforcement (alcohol or money) that he had earned or to gamble and try for double or nothing. The subject could choose to work for alcohol (bourbon) or money which was directly dispensed. The subject could use the money he earned to buy alcohol which was also dispensed directly into the glass above the response panel. Each subject had a key to his machine and was allowed to work at the instrument for as long as he wished at any time of day or night. [National Institute of Mental Health]