Association Affairs

Operations Research Council

"The Application of Operations Research to Governmental Problems" was the subject of a symposium held during the AAAS annual meeting (27 December 1966) under the sponsorship of the Washington Operations Research Council, Washington, D.C. The program was arranged by and presided over by John G. Honig (president, Washington Operations Research Council). The meeting emphasized the use of operations research in the nondefense government sector.

John H. Moss (Office of the Surgeon General) discussed criteria for the evaluation and acceptance of operations research activities in nondefense government areas. He noted the difficulty of applying quantitative techniques to evaluate the effectiveness of agencies which have largely administrative and very generalized functions (Park Service, Public Health Service, FAA, and Social Security Administration). Only parts of the missions (subgoals) of these agencies lend themselves to some quantitative analysis. The measures of effectiveness must therefore be optimized on the subgoals rather than analyzing the worth of each subgoal to the mission of the agency as a whole. Moss described a number of analyses related to subgoals in the agencies mentioned.

William P. Allman (Chicago and Northwestern Railway Company) described a large-scale computer, simulation model which was designed to analyze operating policies of freight trains on a railroad network. This work was performed while Allman was on the staff of the Technical Analysis Division of the National Bureau of Standards. In this simulation model, freight cars flow through the railroad network in accordance with specified operating policies, car sorting policies, and yard operations. The model permits experimentation with alternate car-operating policies and can predict potential improvements. It is believed that the benefit derived from such models lies in their use for planning operations for merged railroad systems.

George Suzuki (National Bureau of Standards) discussed an analytical model of patent application flow in the Patent Office. He described the various paths a patent can take from its initial receipt in the Patent Office to its final disposition as either a granted patent or an abandoned application. The many possible nodes in the patent application "flow," an evaluation of what happens at each branch, and the time delays involved were discussed. The model has been computerized for the evaluation of improved procedures in the Patent Office and an improved utilization of patent examiners and their time.

Alfred Blumstein (President's National Crime Commission) described an analytical model of a total law enforcement system from the detection of the crime through the criminal's return to society following his punishment. The intervening steps, police actions, court actions, punishments, and probations were discussed. Blumstein stressed the difficulty in obtaining data to serve as inputs for this model. He also described a submodel which dealt with the police actions in the apprehension of the criminal and solution of the crime. The effect of witnesses, evidence, command and control functions were analyzed. The difficulties in evaluating these models as cost-effectiveness models were reviewed.

Walter H. A. Hahn, Jr. (Environmental Science Services Administration) spoke about the advantages and difficulties with the new Program Planning and Budgeting Systems when applied to the civilian sector of government. The initial difficulty of defining a department's mission in a way to permit some quantitative analyses to be performed to evaluate the operation must not be underrated. There are additional great problems in many areas where several departments or agencies serve a common interest. There is no doubt that the PPBS procedure will be implemented in the nondefense government sector but there are several basic problems that still have to be solved.

JOHN G. HONIG
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Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine

The Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine was elected as an affiliate at the AAAS annual meeting in Washington, D.C., 30 December 1966. The object of the Academy, established in 1952, is to apply the principles of current scientific knowledge to the practice of medicine and dentistry. The best concept of modern medical and dental practice assumes total care of the physical and emotional needs of the patient. The manifestations of organic disease are often accompanied by changes in attitudes, feelings, and behavior which are amenable to treatment. The effective use of the interpersonal relationship is as important as the therapy chosen. All therapy—medical, surgical, pharmacological, or physical—is a mode of communication. The response to treatment often depends on the doctor's understanding of the emotional needs of the patient through his illness. The principal therapeutic function is to understand, relieve, and eliminate the causes of suffering.

The objectives of the Academy are to advance scientific knowledge, and relate the practice of medicine and dentistry to the interaction of mind, body, and environment through study, laboratory and clinical research; to cooperate with other workers in these and related disciplines; to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of these problems; to publish the results of research; to facilitate total and comprehensive care, and to help the physician or dentist to learn when psychiatric consultation and treatment are essential.

The members of the Academy are members of the medical profession or related disciplines, engaged as practitioners, teachers, or research workers in the field of psychosomatic medicine or any of its branches.

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AAAS Socio-Psychological Prize

Through the generosity of an anonymous donor, the AAAS offers an annual prize of $1000 for an essay in socio-psychological inquiry that furthers understanding of the psychological-social-cultural behavior of human