

Ten Years for the Brain

Congress mandated it; the President's all for it; presidential science adviser D. Allan Bromley has taken the lead in coordinating it. The "Decade of the Brain" seems to have everything going for it—except, maybe, enough money.

On 24 April Bromley released the first "transfederal" report* on the Decade of the Brain, a government-wide effort to foster research relating to disorders of the brain and spinal cord that was kicked off last July with a presidential proclamation. The government says brain and behavioral disorders, including drug and alcohol abuse, afflict about 50 million Americans, with an annual cost to the nation of about \$305 billion.

Noting that "we have learned more about the brain and the nervous system during the past 10 years than throughout all of history," the report predicts "spectacular" ad-

*The report, "Maximizing Human Potential," is available from NINDS, Bldg. 31, Rm. 8A06, Bethesda, Md. 20892.



'MRI scan of a bullet in a brain.'

vances by the end of the century. The initiative targets nine major areas, among them communications disorders, learning and memory, development, and addiction.

The effort is being coordinated by a group under Bromley's office, the subcommittee on brain and behavioral disorders, headed by Roger Porter, deputy director of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). It will involve 22 federal agencies. The first step, says Porter, has been to get the various agencies together and find out what they're doing. NASA, for example, has been studying how the brain reacts to gravity changes, while the Agriculture Department is concerned with nutritional effects.

The next step will be for Bromley's Office of Science and Technology Policy to put together an implementation plan. Money talk is still far down the road—after the plan is approved by Congress, says Porter. Whatever the final budget, NINDS and the National Institute of Mental Health will be the two biggest participants.

not to use jargon, beat around the bush, monopolize the discussion, ramble, whine, or ask for money for themselves.

Cuban AIDS Control

HIV infection rates in many Caribbean nations are among

the highest in the world (*Science*, 19 April, p. 372). Not so in Cuba, where the virus is virtually unknown. This commendable state of affairs stems in part from a measure that would be anathema in most of the rest of the world: quarantine of everyone who tests positive for HIV.

According to the latest fig-

ures provided by Cuban health officials to the Pan American Health Organization, Cuba's population of 11 million includes only 73 AIDS cases, giving an overall infection rate of less than .002% in most of the adult population. In this month's issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*, Eliseo J. Perez-

Stable, an internist from the University of California at San Francisco, says the credit must go to a combined program of mass screening and quarantine.

But Perez-Stable says that the practice of quarantine, in addition to raising issues of human rights, also may not prevent HIV from ultimately spreading more widely in Cuba. The virus might arrive with tourists, who are visiting Cuba in increasing numbers. And since the number of AIDS cases has been so low, Cubans may feel "personally invulnerable to the HIV epidemic" and forego precautions in potentially risky situations.

For now, Cuba's experience has shown that there are effective, albeit draconian, public health measures for controlling HIV.

Biotechnology Execs Earn More

Tired of the measly \$355,300 you get for running an ordinary high-tech firm, or the laughable \$284,800 you bring home for heading a manufacturing company? Try switching to the biotechnology industry. According to a survey of 26 "leading biotechnology firms," chief executives of top U.S. biotech companies earn an average of \$608,300 in total compensation, counting salary, bonus, and stock incentives. The survey was done by William M. Mercer, Inc., which describes itself as a "human resource management consulting firm."

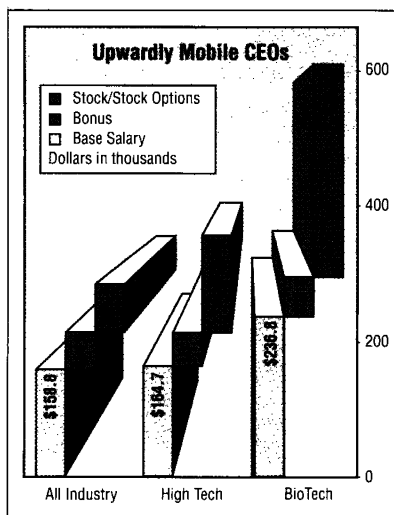
Survey questionnaires went to the top 100 biotech firms (as measured by number of employees). Even though responses came from only 26 of them, Joseph R. Rich, a principal of the William M. Mercer office in Boston specializing in high-technology industries, believes the respondents are rep-

resentative of the biotech industry in general.

To land the kind of salary more often seen by professional athletes than by people in business, look first to biotech firms in New England. CEO's of those firms rake in more than biotech head honchos anywhere else—\$1.1 million, though almost two-thirds of that sum is in the form of long-term stock incentives redeemable only after several years.

Why do CEOs of biotechnology companies get the extra yacht? Perhaps because no other industry relies as heavily on the impact of single individuals in developing products and getting them to market, Rich suggests. That would also explain why long-term stock

options make up so much of the compensation packages. The stocks serve as "golden handcuffs" that help companies hold on to individuals with a genius for the business of gene-splicing.



William M. Mercer Inc.

Correction

In an item on a "dog genome project" (*Science*, 19 April, p. 382), we failed to say that while Eric Lander of MIT and David Botstein of Stanford University developed methods for mapping the genes for complex traits, the test of the method on tomatoes was done (with Lander's collaboration) at Steven D. Tanksley's lab at Cornell University.