The College Experience:

A Focus for Psychiatric Research

formulated by the committee on the college student

Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry
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Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry

Statement of Purpose

The GROUP FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PSYCHIATRY has a membership of approximately 185 psychiatrists, organized in the form of a number of working committees which direct their efforts toward the study of various aspects of psychiatry and toward the application of this knowledge to the fields of mental health and human relations.

Collaboration with specialists in other disciplines has been and is one of GAP’s working principles. Since the formation of GAP in 1946 its members have worked closely with such other specialists as anthropologists, biologists, economists, statisticians, educators, lawyers, nurses, psychologists, sociologists, social workers, and experts in mass communication, philosophy, and semantics. GAP envisions a continuing program of work according to the following aims:

1. To collect and appraise significant data in the field of psychiatry, mental health and human relations;
2. To re-evaluate old concepts and to develop and test new ones;
3. To apply the knowledge thus obtained for the promotion of mental health in good human relations.

GAP is an independent group and its reports represent the composite findings and opinions of its members only, guided by its many consultants.

The College Experience: A Focus for Psychiatric Research was formulated by the Committee on the College Student. The members of this Committee as well as all other Committees are listed below:

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The College Experience:
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I. INTRODUCTION

The first Report of the Committee on the College Student described the role of the psychiatrist in the college. The second Report considered various aspects of personality development in the college student. The psychiatrist’s clinical role was stated in our initial report and further elaborated in the second. The present report will explore ways in which the psychiatrist, both as a clinician and as a behavioral scientist, may contribute to research into the processes of education and the development of personality.

The college setting offers a strategic opportunity for generating, refining, and validating hypotheses about late-adolescent personality development, the processes of education, and the interaction of the individual in a reasonably discrete environment.

The deepening of our knowledge of man and of the most effective ways to educate him is a major concern of both educators and psychiatrists. This common interest makes psychiatric research relevant to the university. Fundamental to a successful joint effort in this area is a willingness to explore, to accept ambiguity, and to be challenged by discrepancies. Prescott, the historian, commenting on these processes in 1848, wrote:

The four years of college life form the most critical epoch in the existence of the individual...they occur at the transition period, when the boy ripens into the man. The University, that little world of itself, shut out by a great barrier, as it were, from the past equally from the future, bounding the visible horizon of the

student like the wall of a monastery, still leaves within them scope enough for all the sympathies and the passions of manhood. Taken from the searching eye of parental supervision, the youthful scholar finds the shackles of early discipline fall from him, as he is left to the disposal, in a degree, of his own hours and the choice of his own associates. His powers are quickened by collision with various minds, and by the border range of studies now open to him. He finds the same incentives to ambition as in the wider world, and contends with the same zeal of honors which, to his eye, soon quite real—and are they not so?—as those in later life. He meets, too, with the same obstacles to success as in the world, the same temptation to idleness, the same gilded seductions, but without the same power of resistance. For in this morning of life his passions are strongest; his animal nature is more sensible to enjoyment; his reasoning faculties less vigorous and mature.

What can the teacher and psychiatrist learn about students and the processes of educating them? This report first raises questions of mutual interest to teacher and psychiatrist in the context of three case examples. The psychiatric research relevant to the college or university and areas for further investigation are then discussed.

This report is primarily concerned with psychiatric contributions to research in the university. Major contributions in this area have been made by other disciplines, but this report, although referring to some of these, makes no attempt to systematically review this work. The Committee has, however, consulted a number of behavioral scientists and educators in the preparation of this report, and deeply appreciates their help.

Case Examples and Questions

Case 1. John Green, an only child, was an exceptionally bright, eager eighteen-year-old freshman. His parents accompanied John to college and remained in town several days to be sure everything went well. After three days in the dormitory, and immediately after the first day of classes, John, in panic, went to his parents and insisted they take him home. He gave no reason for his decision but was depressed and very anxious. Neither his parents nor his college advisor understood his sudden sullenness and changed attitude.

In an interview with the college psychiatrist, John first attributed his change in attitude to his mounting anxiety about an approaching physical fitness test. He was ashamed of his poor physique and was prepared to leave college rather than risk physical exposure. Pressed by this anxiety and the loss of his customary supports, John missed home. He had never been away from his parents; he was frightened.

As John talked, it became clear that his change in mood and his embarrassment were related to his fear of exposure in a more general sense. When he was assigned a long reading list and a ten-page paper in his history course, his anxiety increased. He was afraid of appearing weak and stupid in comparison with his classmates; he was able to see that during the summer months he had avoided recognizing this fear. In the past, fears of being inadequate spurred John to work even more diligently. He came to rely on his parents' praise to allay his concern. With these old supports gone and strange new demands upon him, his old fears of inadequacy erupted. Since his pattern of coping with them had always been to turn to his parents for reassurance, he now felt unable to face college on his own and wanted to leave.

John's behavior raises many questions which go beyond the specific situation and suggest areas of interest for teachers and psychiatrists alike. For example:

1. How can the college evaluate the seriousness of such a situation and decide whether the student should remain?
2. What psychological factors in the student determine his response to new situations?
3. Why are certain aspects of the environment, such as academic demands, dormitory life, or compulsory athletics, disturbing and disrupting for certain students and helpful for others?

John's attitude reflected more than "homesickness." It was based on a pattern of dealing with unpleasant reality and frightening internal pressures by relying on parental reassurance and, if that failed, on flight. The difficulties inherent in arriving at college evoked John's characteristic pattern of adaptation. The experience of his first days of college stimulated his long-standing insecurity over his capabilities, which in turn increased his reliance on his parents and pushed him toward withdrawal from college.

Any student's response to a new situation is in part a function of his psychological perception of the situation and his patterns of defense against the anxiety which it may arouse. The new situation may also challenge further intellectual and emotional growth. In determining the impact of the college environment on the student, we must understand his perception of that environment, his characteristic mode of adaptation, and his level of emotional development. The individual's perceptions and patterns of defense and adaptation may be largely unconscious.

Case 2. George Smith came to a traditional, residential men's college with ambition, high aptitude scores, and the distinction of having graduated first in his class from a large, competitive public high school. His parents did not resent making the necessary financial sacrifices for him to attend college; they were proud that he had won a small scholarship.

In his sophomore year, George found himself in academic trouble—a surprise both to his dean and to himself. It became increasingly difficult for him to maintain interest in his courses. He began to procrastinate, especially on English papers and on his daily assignments in mathematics. Concentration, for the first time, also was difficult. He wondered if he should leave college.

In addition to this academic difficulty, George found he had to make a social adjustment quite different from his expectations. Instead of the casual social life with informal dates to which he had been accustomed in high school, he needed to cope with a situation in which girls were absent and, at the same time, there was much talk about them. The new emphasis on expensive weekend dates and on "making-out" confused him. In an academic atmosphere of intellectual inquiry, George began to question the basis of his rigorous religious beliefs for the first time. The dominant social group consisted of boarding school boys, casually but expensively dressed, who all seemed to know one another. They were never rude, but seemed to regard any social overtures to him as unnecessary. Since he felt lonely, he frequently returned home and became still more isolated from college. Though he had made an excellent record in his first year, his first-term sophomore grades were much lower than had been predicted.
George's troubles suggest several questions for further investigation:

1. How do students integrate the new values, new attitudes, and new ways of behaving?

2. What are the factors in the environment, and in the student, which determine whether this exposure leads to intellectual and/or emotional growth or retreat?

3. What is the influence of social maladjustment, and of feelings of loneliness and depression, on a student's readiness for education and academic commitment?

George's experience, although it does not allow us to give definitive answers to the three questions asked above, indicates their relevance for the college and for the psychiatrist. The considerable variance between George's life at home and at college appeared to present him with a temporarily disrupting stress. Each student's perception of the severity of a stress and his pattern of coping with it are two crucial factors in determining whether he responds to the stress with vigor and excitement or with emotional and intellectual retreat.

George was threatened by the behavior he saw around him and even more by what he began to feel within himself. Past injunctions were under pressure from both internal and external forces. The easy friendships among the other students made him feel left out and lonely. He felt awkward and inadequate with girls. Previously, George had put almost all of his available energy into academic work, ignoring—as far as he could—his adolescent sexual feelings. Faced with a failure in his social relationships with both men and women, his self-esteem steadily decreased and he became depressed. The depression led to a withdrawal of interest from his surroundings, an inability to work effectively, and inevitably to academic difficulties. Since he was unable to buttress his self-esteem by excellence in school work as he had in the past, his depression deepened.

Case 3. Barbara Jones was called before the dean for flagrant plagiarism. After a good academic record during her first two years of college, her grades fell in her junior year. When interviewed by the college psychiatrist, Barbara at first flatly denied the plagiarism. It became apparent during the interview that her difficulties were not restricted to the classroom. Her family situation was also disturbing her. Her mother had died suddenly three years previously; and during the past year, without much advance notice to Barbara, her father had remarried a woman only a few years Barbara's senior. In addition, Barbara dated a student who was socially unacceptable to her status-conscious father. The relationship with her boy friend led to some sexual involvement. As her emotional problems increased, her grades dropped. Her father's subsequent severe reprimand increased her tension and further decreased her capacity to study.

In her talks with the college psychiatrist, Barbara was helped to recognize a relationship between her resentment about her father's recent marriage and his criticism of her boy friend and of her grades. She could then see its relevance to her sexual behavior. The psychiatrist assisted her in recognizing that her plagiarism was determined by complicated motivations. In part, it was an attempt to regain some feeling of status in her father's eyes through high academic standing. She came to see that it was also a self-punitive act related to her guilt feelings about her sexual behavior. Finally, it contained an element of rebelliousness in a disguised attempt to hurt her father through her actions.

In addition to the immediate clinical problem, this case raises broader questions:

1. How are study and disciplinary problems related to underlying emotional conflicts?

2. What is the relationship of sexual maturation to the student's social and intellectual development?

3. Is rebelliousness an inevitable aspect of this phase of adolescent development?

The task of relinquishing childhood patterns of behavior involves more than the ability to leave home. The family situation may continue to have far-reaching effects on the student and on his behavior at college. Students may be emotionally fixed on problems that were never settled in their past, even though the present is relatively free of pressure. Psychiatrists and teachers are concerned with understanding these aspects of the college climate which facilitate or inhibit the constructive resolution of such normal developmental tasks. Further investigation can bring us closer to definitive answers to the questions posed in these typical cases.
Attitudes of Educators toward Psychiatric Research on Campus

In gathering information on which to base this report, committee members interviewed teachers and university administrators about their views of the role that psychiatric research fulfills and could fulfill in the university. The investigators obtained information from approximately 15 institutions, both state and private, with a wide geographical distribution. We found a number of areas of common interest.

The faculty members at one university with high academic standards indicated that facts were less important than the development of ways of thinking. In addition, they held that the basic purpose of education was to establish appropriate attitudes toward the relationship between facts and to encourage a mature, free use of the intellect. This institution is not necessarily typical but its faculty reflects one attitude that educators have toward their underlying educational purpose.

The educators at this university were also aware of the many interacting elements that influence the educational process and have conducted extensive studies correlating these factors one with another. In our interviews, they expressed interest in such areas as the role of the social community, the teacher-student relationship, and adolescent development.

One particularly articulate dean contrasted the view of education 40 years ago, when learning ability was thought to depend solely on academic skills, with our present concept involving a more intricate balance of academic skills, emotional receptivity, cognitive ability, and constructive motivation. He commented on the need to understand more fully both the periods of greatest learning capacity and the relationship of the learning process to the individual’s emotional development. He felt that one of the ancillary goals of education was to help students order their lives and thus increase their ability to study. He believed that education should teach them how to use their capabilities.

This dean pointed out that knowledge of the social system was highly relevant to him and that teacher-student relationships were an important area for study. He cited the need for a certain “distance” between teacher and student, and felt that it would be useful to know more about the optimum distance and the factors affecting its achievement. He commented that extra-curricular activities were an escape for some students, that enjoyment for its own sake was perhaps less the reason for engaging in the activity than some inner problem that the student avoided by such participation. This observation led the dean to remark that many questions would be at least partially illuminated if we knew more about adolescent development. A greater understanding of the student’s personality development would help to explain the factors that were consciously or unconsciously preventing him from doing his best work.

The dean mentioned the changed attitude of most universities toward the floundering student. Although such a student would once have been left to sink or swim, now every effort is made to try to understand and correct any emotional difficulties that might be causing him trouble. The psychiatrist could be helpful in developing a specific view of both the student and the college. The dean wished for a psychiatric estimate of the pressures the college puts on the student and the supports it gives him.

Some educators were interested in the contribution research psychiatrists could make, along with other behavioral scientists, to those concepts and methods which would make it possible to study the learning experience as an aspect of a single process whereby the student gains and retains new information. These educators said they would also like to see what contributions such psychiatric research could make to an understanding of (1) the integration of the various new elements confronting the college student with one another and with past experience, and (2) the synthesis of all these elements and factors to produce the conditions which would enable the student to achieve a more creative mastery of his environment. One educator felt that a very difficult yet important step is to penetrate the veil which frequently prevents college students from showing their seriousness and sense of purpose. This educator, a university president, expressed the opinion that psychiatric research in the college can make a central contribution by providing a setting in which the student would be able to tell the “truth” and say something about his inner beliefs and feelings.

In this section a number of questions have been posed which suggest areas of mutual interest to educators and psychiatrists. We
asked whether challenge, change, and discontinuities stimulate the student's commitment to learning, or affect his ability to integrate his experience at college. Teachers we have interviewed have asked similar questions. Both educators and psychiatrists are indebted to the social and behavioral scientists who have already made important contributions to this area. Before going further into the issues raised in this section, however, we will review the work that has already been done by psychiatrists in research relating to the college and the student.

II. REVIEW OF PSYCHIATRIC RESEARCH RELATED TO COLLEGES AND THE COLLEGE SETTING*

Any historical review of representative psychiatric research related to higher education must be understood in the light of the general development of psychiatry. Traditionally, psychiatry is a clinical subject and psychiatrists work primarily from clinical material. Whether the aim is description of disease, as in the late-nineteenth-century work on classification of psychiatric disorders, or whether it involves the development of theoretical models of psychological functioning, as in Freud's work on psychodynamics, the basic observations have been made in a clinical setting and usually have grown out of the care of emotionally ill individuals. Psychiatric research in the college setting is no exception, and to date it has stemmed mainly from experiences of college psychiatrists in their clinical work with students. However, a trend has developed toward applying the theoretical knowledge of psychiatry to non-clinical problems.

The college psychiatrist is a relatively new specialist. The date when the first psychiatric service was established in an American college is hard to determine, but there is considerable evidence to suggest that Dr. Stewart Paton at Princeton in 1910 first recognized the need for psychiatric help for students and began to do professional counseling in an informal manner.1 By 1930 there were probably not more than 15 colleges with an active psychiatric service; expansion did not develop until the next decade. Furthermore, the psychiatrist frequently worked on a part-time basis, and because of the large caseload, became preoccupied more with the treatment of students than with the broader potentialities for research inherent

*All the references indicated by numbers in this chapter are listed in numerical order beginning on page 751.
in his position. Originally, the questions the psychiatrist asked about his college work were in two categories. The first category involved the description and management of clinical syndromes in students seen on the campus. The second was concerned with the administrative and community problems of psychiatrists working in the college. These problems were considered against a background of questions related more generally to the educational process.56

Early Work of Psychiatrists in College

The initial phase of the work of psychiatrists in college was summed up in Mental Health in College, by Fry and Rostow, published in 1942.57 Using numerous clinical case histories as its focal point, this outstanding work described approximately ten years’ experience with students. Although its orientation is clinical and emphasizes the individual with emotional difficulties, the book does not neglect the college environment and its possible influence on the individual’s problems.

The period following World War II brought a great upsurge in psychiatric interest in general, and the college psychiatrist, while not leaving the field of clinical investigation, became concerned with questions of a somewhat broader nature. These questions concerned not only individual adjustment and illness, but also the theoretical aspects of normal emotional development, the factors affecting a student’s readiness for education, and the effects of the educational experience on the student.

As the questions became broader in scope, psychiatrists increasingly joined behavioral scientists from other disciplines to participate in multidisciplinary studies. Two notable studies of this kind were the Grant Study at Harvard and the Mellon Study at Vassar.58-59 Started in 1952, the latter research project on personality development in the college years is a pioneering effort at interdisciplinary research in this area. It has included psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and a psychiatrist—all under the direction of Sanford.

Although the extensive psychological research in education is not reviewed here, it is relevant to enumerate those areas of special significance to the colleges. The development and refinement of aptitude, achievement, and intelligence tests have had a major impact on admissions procedures; furthermore, many personality measures have been used as aids to counseling. It was expected that the tests could also be used in screening students for admission and, when combined with information from the aptitude measures, would increase the predictability of student performance in college. Both objective tests, such as the Bernreuter and Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, and projective tests, such as the Rorschach and Thematic Apperception Tests, were studied extensively in this frame of reference. In a related field, a series of special tests and measures were developed to determine vocational interests. An important example is the Strong Vocational Interest Blank.

In addition to measuring individual capacities, psychologists described individual behavior and attitudes in various contexts. Two approaches predominated: first, studies of background variables which bear on the individual’s attitudes toward his college experience; second, studies of change during the course of college with emphasis on the impact of the educational experience in producing the change. In the clinical field also, psychologists have made significant studies analyzing the process of counseling and therapy with students. Finally, psychologists have given much thought to the theoretical and practical study of problems that do not pertain specifically to college but which are inevitably associated with any college experience. These studies would include the analysis of thinking, memory, learning, and problem-solving; the investigation of specific skills such as reading; and the observation of complex social behavior in terms of group interaction.

Social Aspects of the College Setting

Sociological and anthropological studies involving work on social aspects of the college setting are relatively recent. One of the earliest studies, an attempt to understand the structure of student society as a prerequisite to understanding student behavior, was published by Hartson in 1945.60 About the same time, Newcomb published work on attitude development at Bennington.61 In the post-war period a sociologist or anthropologist has been included on the staffs of such projects as the Carnegie Study at Princeton, the Mellon Study at Vassar, and the Yale Study Group. The Cornell Values Study, a major project undertaken by sociologists on several campuses, was reported recently in the book, What College Students Think; and Boys in White, a comprehensive
study of student culture in a medical school, has just been published.\textsuperscript{62-64} In addition, there are numerous small studies, frequently done as doctoral dissertations, of campus social phenomena. In general, the feeling has developed that any study of the educational process at the college level must take into account not only the effects of an individual's background on his apprehension of, and response to, any given college experience, but also his interaction with the college community, the effects of various campus value systems, and the position of students in their life-cycle.

Since 1945 five major publications have appeared which are pertinent at least in part to a discussion of psychiatric research in college. These are the comprehensive annotated bibliography \textit{Student Mental Health}, covering the period 1936-1955, edited by Funkenstein and Wilkie; \textit{Mental Health in College and University}, a broad view of the position of the psychiatrist in the college setting, by Farnsworth; \textit{Psychosocial Problems of College Men}, a series of studies by members of the Yale Division of Student Mental Hygiene, edited by Wedge; \textit{The Student and Mental Health, An International View}, a compilation of papers prepared for the Princeton Conference in 1956, edited by Funkenstein; and \textit{Emotional Problems of the Student}, edited by Blaine and McArthur, which describes the various problems encountered in the Harvard Mental Health Service.\textsuperscript{65-67} In addition, various individual research papers have come from many different campuses, as well as occasional reports from other nations.\textsuperscript{68-101}

\section*{Major Areas of Current Investigation}

The questions being asked currently by investigators (including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and sociologists) may be divided into five areas: (1) clinical, (2) epidemiological, (3) administrative, (4) developmental, and (5) an area involving interaction between individual and institution.

Under the clinical heading there continue to be studies of problems relating to the diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric disorders. These include, first, work on aspects of disease classification which may be useful in increasing understanding of students' problems and helpful in adding to the effectiveness of treatment measures. Carlson's description of "acute confusional states" is one example of a recent attempt to define a syndrome which seems to be particularly relevant to this age group.\textsuperscript{102} Earlier delineations of such syndromes include Blox' study of "prolonged adolescence"; more recently Snyder and Kaufman have discussed the identity crisis as a normal phase of late adolescent ego development.\textsuperscript{103-104} Second, attempts have been made to study existing diagnostic entities as they appear in the college setting, as exemplified by Arnstein's paper on the borderline patient; the Ross and Mendelsohn article on homosexuality in college; Braaten's description of schizophrenia on the campus; Coon's article on acute psychosis; and Blaine and McArthur's article on character disorders.\textsuperscript{105-106} Furthermore, Nixon raises questions relative to an "undiagnosable" entity seen in a college clinic; and Blaine, McArthur, and Walters describe other syndromes which seem more or less directly connected with college.\textsuperscript{110-112} Third, questions regarding methods of therapy and the effects and effectiveness of psychotherapy continue to occupy many workers.\textsuperscript{114-119} The hazards of evaluating results of psychotherapy make this a difficult field, but Wedge, Blaine, Ingersheimer, Polk, and Goldberg, and Muench discuss aspects of this in their work.\textsuperscript{117-122} Fourth, there are efforts to study prognosis in such articles as Harrison's study of students who leave college because of emotional problems.\textsuperscript{123}

The second major area, covering questions of an epidemiological nature, is distinguished by several statistical surveys which attempt to establish factors common to certain illnesses or patterns of behavior.\textsuperscript{124-125} Rust's paper, "The Epidemiology of Mental Health in College," treats the subject directly.\textsuperscript{126} A group at the National Institute of Mental Health is currently making an extensive and carefully designed study describing factors contributing to breakdown in the first year of college.\textsuperscript{127} Various studies, such as those of Parrish and Rook, Temby, Lyman, and Carpenter on suicide, have epidemiological aspects.\textsuperscript{128-132} Separated parents as a factor in emotional disturbance has been investigated by Robbins, and psychiatric difficulties in medical students by Stokes, Dewan, and Bojar.\textsuperscript{133-136} In addition, several of the larger projects already mentioned have collected data which may eventually be used for this purpose.

A closely related area, roughly described by the term "adminis-
trative," covers research designed to obtain information that may be directly used to answer questions about some specific college problem. The effects of early admission is one such problem that has been studied by Farnsworth, Funkenstein, and Wedge. Other problems include health screening procedures as described by Gray and by Whittington; case finding as described experimentally by Wedge; use of the college psychiatric clinic as described by Davie; and evaluation of the effects of the introduction of a campus psychiatric service as brought into use at Southern Connecticut State College. Walters has described the effects of criminal behavior on a segment of the college, and Whittington has studied the difference between the clientele at two "helping" agencies at Kansas. In addition, the overall role of the college psychiatrist continues to be re-examined periodically, either in relation to specific problems such as ethical considerations or communications, or more generally as in Farnsworth's recent review, and in terms of services offered as in Gundle and Kraft's survey.

The fourth major area for research concerns questions about the normal emotional development of the individual. In this area there is a wide range of studies, including those of emotional, behavioral, and intellectual development. Perhaps the most important are papers by Anna Freud and Erikson which represent basic research in the late-adolescent phase of ego development. Erikson's work on identity formation has profoundly influenced current thinking about psychological maturation. It has contributed to the design of such projects as the above-mentioned National Institute of Mental Health study of adaptation of normal high school students during the transition to college. Further contributions are described in a panel discussion held at the 1957 meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association. Nixon has suggested a particular step in the developmental process which he calls self-process; Ingham and Fountain have described problems of "normal maturing." Also in this general area of study must be included work on the investigation of individual capacities. Studies of aptitudes and performance are progressing in many places, along with continuing efforts to refine techniques. Still others have studied specific phases of behavior particularly appropriate for investigation in the college setting. An important example of this is the work by Namnum and Prelinger on the process of reading.

Underlying these areas of research is the study of the interaction between the student and the educational institution. There is increasing discussion in the literature of the effect of the college environment on student behavior, values, attitudes, and emotional growth. Biber's longitudinal study at the Bank Street School of Education investigates the primary school influence on the young child's ego development; the methods and strategies of this interdisciplinary study are relevant to other educational settings. The current project at Harvard combines a cross-sectional and a longitudinal approach to measure the University's impact on the student. A group at Tulane is studying the developmental problems of medical students, and two papers from the University of Michigan report on psychiatric factors in falling medical students. A project dealing with aspects of faculty and student interaction was reported by Berman in his paper on group meetings with teachers. Two other major interdisciplinary projects are especially germane to the issues discussed in this report, though they are not psychiatric research. The Center for the Study of Higher Education at Berkeley has undertaken a five-year investigation of six colleges and their students. The Department of Psychiatry of Cowell Memorial Hospital at the University of California (Berkeley) and the Institute for the Study of Human Problems at Stanford University are currently engaged in a five-year study concentrating on intensive interviewing of male and female students and designed to determine differential patterns of personality development during the college year. The previously mentioned Vassar project is continuing its inquiry into the personality change that occurs during college.

Though the preceding review represents only a partial list of the work completed or in progress, it gives some idea of the range and scope of psychiatric research relevant to the college experience.
III. AREAS FOR PSYCHIATRIC RESEARCH IN THE COLLEGE

The preceding sections have suggested some areas of study and problems on the college campus to which psychiatric research might contribute further understanding. In this section the range of possible subjects will be discussed more systematically. This is a representative, not an exhaustive, list.

The psychiatrist's understanding of the college and the student comes from intensive interviews with students and faculty, from membership on various academic committees, and from living in the academic community. The interaction of college and student is heard by the psychiatrist as the students speak of their experiences. Psychiatrists look for different kinds of information about students; they ask themselves questions about the impact of college life that differ from those asked by the faculty. This section will explore the relevance of this psychiatric information to the educational experience.

The research contributions of the college psychiatrist will vary in relation to local conditions in the college, to the psychiatrist's skills and interests, and to the level of his research sophistication. He can be expected to make contributions either alone or in collaboration with other social scientists, in four major areas: (1) concepts of personality and personality development; (2) problems of individual psychopathology and emotional disturbance; (3) studies of the interaction between individual and educational institutions; and (4) problems in the broader sphere of the educational process.

Concepts of Personality

The answers to the questions raised by psychiatrists and by educators in the first two sections of this report require hypotheses regarding the structure and functioning of personality. Two representative questions were: "What is the influence of social maladjustment, feelings of loneliness, and depression on a student's readiness for education and academic commitment?" and "How can one insure a mature, free use of the intellect?"

A psychodynamic concept of personality changes and enlarges the nature of the questions that can be asked about an individual's functioning. This concept also shifts the focus from the description and identification of isolated traits to the study of dynamic processes within the personality. Similarly, the concept of unconscious forces affecting behavior opens up a series of possible relationships and causal connections which go beyond the immediately observable "facts" about an individual. Thus, unconscious conflicts become a most important factor in understanding an individual's behavior in a given situation. For example, in the case of the girl who plagiarized, it became apparent after exploration that her plagiarism resulted from a series of complex, primarily unconscious forces. The concept of the unconscious influences the selection of data relevant to the study of behavior.

According to the concept of psychic determinism, behavior does not originate by chance but results from the dynamic interaction of basic drives, constitutional givens, personality patterns developed as a result of past experience, current states, and the individual's perception of the environment. Thus, in the second case, George's failure to complete his work is viewed not simply as " laziness" but as "symptomatic" behavior. The causal factors include his reaction to decreased self-esteem, uncertainties about his immediate goals, derivatives of basic drives, and his particular perception of his environment.

A theoretical model of personality emerges which views behavior as the ordered result of complex inter-relationships between past experience, present situations, and future expectations. The motivating forces involved are both conscious and unconscious, and derive their power from instinctual drives as well as from more rational ambitions and goals. This model does not supply automatic explanations, but it does permit an approach to a variety of difficult problems. For example, the student may express his self-defeating needs by procrastinating assignments, failing to
study for examinations, or plagiarizing a simple test. The student may fail because he is terrified of success. With these concepts it is possible to view these acts as the result of conflict between his conscious goal of success in college and unconscious forces which oppose the attainment of this goal.

One of the chief areas of interest to the college psychiatrist is the study of normal development of adolescent personality and the relationship of clinical insights to current theory. Erikson's concept of identity formation as a significant frame of reference in the developmental process of the late-adolescent period is an important contribution to understanding the overall process of maturing.

Radical changes occur in the student during the college years as he moves from the dependence of the early adolescent to the independence of the adult. In this course he must arrive at new and satisfactory understandings of love and independence, master aggressive drives, resolve his psychological sexual identity, and assume adult patterns of thought and behavior. He has to learn much about the operations of the ego in achieving these tasks. A study of these problems could further extend our understanding of the ego assets most consistent with student growth in college, the most important processes involved in the development of adult learning skills, and the factors affecting the student's readiness to use his intellect actively and creatively.

Clinical Problems

Emotional disturbance and its treatment remain the most obvious area for research by the psychiatrist. The fact that this report emphasizes the role of the psychiatrist as an investigator of the "normal" aspects of the student and college should not obscure the continuing importance of psychopathology and psychotherapy as areas for study. The psychiatrist's chief competence continues to be in his use of clinical material.

The cases described in the Introduction illustrated some of the emotional disturbances that can interfere with the student's functioning in college. Definitive studies of the clinical entities seen in college students have not yet been done. Inability to concentrate, inability to complete papers, examination anxiety, and reading difficulties are common student difficulties that have their roots in emotional disturbance. Systematic investigation of the relationship between these and similar problems and the underlying disturbance would provide a reference for understanding variations in student performance.

Failure in college by the well-endowed student is worthy of a series of studies in view of the increasing competition for admission and the considerable investment the community has made in each student. The student coming to college is faced with stress. His methods of coping with it will be related to his interaction to the figures in the college who are meaningful to him, to his relationships with important individuals in the past, to his general response to stress, and to the internal sources of his anxiety. When one or more of his usual methods of adaptation are blocked or unavailable, serious disruption may occur. The student whose self-esteem rests primarily on an outstanding academic performance may become severely disturbed when he receives mediocre grades. His problem is compounded when he must report these grades to disappointed parents.

Inasmuch as "failure" can be temporary and does not necessarily lead to the student's withdrawal from college, it would be important to determine the incidence of temporary regression in students and to study the factors which lead to eventual mastery in some students and to retreat in others. In connection with student withdrawal from college, considerable work needs to be done in developing criteria for making recommendations about leaves, the fruitful use of the student's time away from college, and the optimal time for his readmission.

There is a wide range of behavior which is of concern to the college because it is usually self-destructive and also may reflect adversely on the institution. Pathologic behavior such as stealing, cheating, and wanton destruction also has direct effects on the members of the academic community. Sexual behavior may be a source of considerable concern, and no campus is immune to the upset caused by the tragedy of suicide. The causes and best methods of managing these difficulties in a college community need further investigation. In these problems the psychiatrist may have direct access to significant information which can be used to clarify sources of disturbance and suggest ways of prevention.
Psychiatrists are interested in continuing to study the various clinical entities and syndromes in the late-adolescent period. Current evidence suggests that certain emotional decompensations occurring in this age group have significantly different prognosis and course than superficially similar illnesses occurring later in life. The most frequently observed symptoms in college students are anxiety reactions, depressive reactions, and psychosomatic illness. The relationship of these frequently transient reactions to the more severe syndromes in adult life needs further clarification.

There is also a need for further investigation into the treatment of choice for the various clinical conditions seen on campus. Furthermore, special problems of technique deserve further elucidation. The college student with a precarious and constantly shifting balance needs a different therapeutic experience than a dependent child or an independent adult. An inappropriate therapeutic mixture of autonomy and support can obstruct the resolution of a particular adolescent crisis. The apparently simple differentiation between an adolescent adjustment reaction and a psychoneurosis carries with it treatment implications which require further exploration.

In addition to investigation of the preferred method of treatment, studies are needed to determine factors which affect the student’s inclination to seek help as well as information about the sources from which aid is sought. In this connection research is necessary to understand the effect of increased knowledge of available facilities on the method of referral and, in turn, the effect of the method of referral on the outcome of therapy.

The psychiatrist, with the psychologist and sociologist, is studying the epidemiology of mental disturbance in college by a complex of data collection and assessment methods. The college age is a crucial period for such a study, for the student is still sufficiently in the family orbit to enable the psychiatrist to obtain data on his background, but he is also sufficiently independent so that the sheltering effect of the family is less likely to disguise areas of difficulty. This problem requires additional investigation with the more extensive development of studies of incidence and prevalence. Such studies will provide useful comparisons between “pathological” and “normal” states.

Interaction between the Student and the College

A third major area for investigation is the interaction between the student and the college. The student comes to the college with his unique past history, his assets and liabilities, and his unconscious patterns of adaptation. The college itself is comprised of a diversity of new individual personalities with whom interaction is inevitable. The college, too, has a history which has led to traditional patterns of expected behavior and a series of current curricular and extra curricular demands. The student’s interaction with this new environment will inevitably be influenced, in addition, by his own processes of maturation and personality development that are independent of his status as a student.

The student’s initial interaction with the college is a complex process. He will have contact with it in many ways and on different levels. The first case of John is a dramatic example of an immediate intense interaction. The initial interaction may be gradual and less dramatic, but no less important as an area of study.

Some general and obvious statements can be made concerning the experience of the freshman college student. There will be discontinuity between his past and present. Knowledge of his previous patterns for coping with discontinuity and stress will clarify those situations that he finds particularly disrupting or provoking of anxiety. Knowledge of the academic and social system of the college he is entering will clarify the range of adaptive patterns it sanctions. Too great a discrepancy between the past and present may precipitate significant emotional reactions which impede normal growth and development. On the other hand, the student who experiences little discrepancy between his past and his college experience may lose an opportunity for growth and become apathetic or complacent.

George Smith, our second case, experienced serious discontinuity in his new social, intellectual, and sexual experiences and eventually developed severe anxiety and depression. George’s problems highlight the broader theoretical issues of a student adjusting to a particular college. Specific studies are needed to develop practical methods for recognizing and assisting such students before they experience a crucial functional breakdown, whether it be emotional, academic, or social. For example, would greater con-
continuity in either the social or the sexual area have allowed George to manage his academic problems? If so, what might have been done to minimize the discontinuities? Does minimizing lead to complacency in students?

Every institution inevitably creates many anxieties and contains multiple sources of support. For example, a policy regarding the extension of a deadline on a paper may have widely divergent effects on different individuals. For one, the extension may reinforce rebellion expressed by procrastination. The "successful" rebellion may then lead to disabling anxiety. In contrast, the refusal of an extension may convince the student that this kind of irresponsibility is not tolerated and actually encourage mature planning and achievement. For another student, the extension may be evidence that the college authority is reasonable and flexible, and he will therefore respond with responsible creative work. A refusal for this student may reinforce his view of authority as rigid and lead to an attitude of compliant "getting by" rather than encourage him to do his best in his studies. Educational and administrative policies should be evaluated in terms of their providing the most constructive climate for the use of the college's resources. Considerable study remains to be done in this area.

Admissions committees in many colleges attempt to predict the student's ability to adapt successfully to their institution. Studies using previous academic performance, aptitude and achievement tests, and varying amounts of social and personal history have enabled colleges to predict grades with reasonably high precision. Faculty and psychiatrists are both aware that these predictions can be upset by an intrusion of psychological factors which were not known at the time of the prediction. Greater knowledge of individual psychological patterns and a clearer picture of adolescent developmental processes, combined with an understanding of a college's institutional patterns, can add to the effectiveness this predictive procedure and increase the usefulness of the prediction.

Investigations of the student's non-academic life might include an evaluation of the effect of his living in a dormitory, at home, in an apartment, or in a fraternity house. Such studies might determine the impact on the students of the size and physical design of the campus. The experiment could ask whether the campus, the architecture of dormitory and classroom, facilitated or disrupted certain patterns of interaction among students and faculty. These and related problems have received careful attention in several new colleges and universities which have had some choice in arranging their physical and social facilities.

The student's perception of his college is a function of both the college as it exists and the college as he experiences it. It is important to know how he perceives the college and how he integrates his experience with the institution. The student's view of his college may be different from that of the faculty or the administration. He may perceive the rules of the college to be at cross-purposes with its avowed goals. For example, while a college may express a strong desire to encourage the maturity of its students, the student may feel that "rigid" dormitory rules demand mechanical compliance quite opposite to responsible self-direction. The student caught in a set of limits and controls which he sees as contradictory (and his view may be accurate) may respond in a way which satisfies neither himself nor the college. If there is too great a difference between the student's perceptions and those of the faculty, tension and failure in communication are likely to arise. This, in turn, may lead to significant moral problems which might be expressed in a campus crisis, such as a student "riot." These campus crises afford a particularly valuable area for study since they usually represent the eruption of intense feelings and conflicting attitudes. Careful attention to these crises may well highlight and clarify a number of the complex forces at work within the academic community.

The student brings with him to college a variety of attitudes and personality patterns which affect his perceptions of the college. If the student's perceptions are significantly distorted by previous neurotic patterns, trouble or failure may be anticipated. The student who has a compelling need to provoke the same reaction in his dealings with faculty that he had experienced with his parents may actually succeed in drawing an angry reaction from a mild professor. If he distorts his perception of an event, he may perceive as cold and critical a dean who is actually sympathetic and genuinely understanding. It follows that to understand transactions between a student and a teacher, one must have a precise knowl-
edge of the conscious and unconscious motives and attitudes of both the student and the teacher.

What has been described for the student applies as well to college faculty, administration, and staff. Every faculty member has his own perceptions, stereotypes, and expectations of students, which affect his dealings with them. This is probably crucial if the student is to have a spontaneous and varied experience. The more explicit these conscious and unconscious attitudes of the teacher toward the student, the more effective will be his educational planning and the more cogent his evaluation of the college’s effectiveness. This is not to imply that a teacher in the classroom should be preoccupied with his student’s or his own unconscious attitudes. Rather, study of the interaction process within the college is a necessary and legitimate area for the teacher’s attention.

Broader Implications Relative to the Educational Process

There are many aspects of the educational process worthy of study although they are not easily classified. Investigation in these areas would have a broader or more abstract character but would draw on the information gained from studies described in the foregoing sections.

An important area for study is the educational goal of the college and the learning process. The educators interviewed expressed their interest in “the mature free use of the intellect.” Methods of assuring the achievement of this goal are poorly understood. Most patterns of education in college continue to be traditional despite sporadic attempts to try new modes of teaching. Recently there have been further efforts to experiment with various new techniques of learning, particularly in the mathematical sciences and in foreign languages. A new development is the increasing use of teaching machines as auxiliary educational aids. The psychiatrist can provide information about the effect of these methods on the individual psychological processes, and on the interaction between student and teacher. This would include studying the impact of formal education on creative thinking, productivity, and intellectual maturation.

There are a number of questions of obvious importance which relate to the motivational forces affecting the student’s commitment to getting a college education.

For example, what is the difference between the student who wants to get as much as he can from his studies and the student who works only for “grades”? Are relationships with the faculty important? Is the tendency to commitment closely related to general intellectual and emotional maturation or is it a relatively independent attitude? What can be said about changes in commitment in relation to the learning process as a whole? In yet another respect, is there a possible difference of academic commitment between men and women students? Does the student with fixed vocational commitment benefit less from the “liberal education” aspects of a college curriculum than the individual who feels freer to experiment and shift his interests? How is commitment affected by the possible need to shift from a particular student identity to a quite different post-college identity? In general, what is the relationship between development during college, and the experience and further development after college? For example, what happens psychologically to the outstanding art history scholar who goes into his family’s manufacturing business? Or to the woman mathematics student who becomes a housewife and mother?

All of these questions suggest the need for an inclusive model of the learning process. Psychologists and educators have done considerable work in this field. Jerome Bruner’s The Process of Education represents an excellent summary of some of the current research and outlines the major areas for further study. Clinical experience of psychiatrists and psychoanalysts can contribute to the further refinement of a useful model. Understanding teaching methods, curriculum content, and methods of evaluating academic performance is only one aspect of the complicated educational transaction. One of the educators referred to in the first section commented on another dimension to this transaction when he spoke of the optimal “distance” between teacher and student. The attitudes and skills in teachers which best serve to inspire student interest and enthusiasm also require further study. The model of

the learning process must include the individual as part of an interacting system. It must also account for his emotional and intellectual development and the factors which influence his characteristic relationships to others.

The psychiatrist may also contribute to the study of the impact of the institution on the individual in the broadest sense. This may be focused on the influences brought to bear during the transition periods when the student is entering or leaving college. Although most of the studies of this nature have been pioneered by behavioral scientists other than psychiatrists, recent collaborations such as the National Institute of Mental Health and Yale studies have suggested that a psychiatrist can add to the usefulness of such investigations. Some attempts to explore the transition into and out of college have been made, but much work needs to be done to understand the sources of the changes that occur. Finally, these studies could be used to outline the characteristics of those individuals who change in contrast to those who are little modified by attending college. The college experience, deliberately designed to induce change in students, must be considered something of a failure if no change occurs.

Four areas in which the psychiatrist can be expected to make significant research contributions have been discussed. These areas are: (1) concepts of personality development; (2) problems of individual psychopathology and emotional illness; (3) studies of the interaction between the individual and the educational institution; and (4) problems in the educational process. Some of the practical issues associated with psychiatric research on the campus will be taken up in the final section of the report.

IV. SOME PRACTICAL ISSUES OF PSYCHIATRIC RESEARCH ON CAMPUS

Many of the practical issues inherent in conducting psychiatric research on campus apply with equal force in all research in behavioral science. The proper use of the interview, the interaction between observer and observed, ethical problems of confidentiality, and the "rights" of the subject are outstanding examples of such issues. In addition to these general problems the college setting may contain special conditions, both pitfalls and opportunities.

The psychiatrist and the educator are committed to creating an atmosphere in which change and growth are possible, and both are interested in establishing a way of achieving this end. Nevertheless, problems may arise when research in the college is conducted with the aim of gaining information to facilitate the accomplishment of these goals. These difficulties may occur primarily on the side of the college or primarily on the part of the psychiatrist although in any given case they will usually be a reflection of the interaction between the two. The difficulties are discussed in their relation to (1) misconceptions of the psychiatrist's role, (2) the obvious problems that are created when a member of a community studies that community, and (3) the psychiatrist himself.

Misconceptions of the Psychiatrist's Role

College communities with psychiatric services are familiar with the psychiatrist as a medical specialist, consultant, or therapist. His role as a member of a research team may be less familiar and thus contribute to confusing or conflicting expectations. The college will almost certainly regard his interest in clinical research as legitimate. Studies of the incidence of depression or the psychodynamics of severe examination anxiety are similar to medical studies of the incidence of infectious mononucleosis or the epidemi-
likely themselves to undertake to alter certain aspects of their behavior.

In the therapeutic situation, understanding is prerequisite for intelligent change. The doctor, should not force his change but rather phrase the range of choices available to his patient. Similarly, he must also avoid making the limitations as well as the potentials of his techniques clear. He should avoid giving advice or making recommendations, but rather remain clear about his own role and goals. He must also be aware of the limitations implicit in his techniques. When the patient is clear, the doctor may ask for clarification of the situation, the patient may be clear in the patterns of failure, and the doctor may see what he calls the therapy to the patient.

The psychiatrist must be clear about his own role and goals. He must be aware of the limitations and possibilities of his techniques. He should avoid giving advice or making recommendations, but rather remain clear about his own role and goals. He must also be aware of the limitations implicit in his techniques. When the patient is clear, the doctor may ask for clarification of the situation, the patient may be clear in the patterns of failure, and the doctor may see what he calls the therapy to the patient.

Since the psychiatrist, historically, has been identified with the medical model, the psychiatrist's traditional role may become less clear and the area of his interests definition, the community may express nostalgia for the area of his interests. The psychiatrist, in the role of the medical model, may become less clear and the area of his interests definition, the community may express nostalgia for the area of his interests. The psychiatrist, in the role of the medical model, may become less clear and the area of his interests definition, the community may express nostalgia for the area of his interests. The psychiatrist, in the role of the medical model, may become less clear and the area of his interests definition, the community may express nostalgia for the area of his interests. The psychiatrist, in the role of the medical model, may become less clear and the area of his interests definition, the community may express nostalgia for the area of his interests. 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values or principles are, in fact, violated by the research. Fundamental respect for the individual is obviously ignored where specific research data, obtained in confidence, is made available to a college for administrative action against a student. A violation of individual rights would also occur where students are not given a choice about their participation as subjects. Taking such ethical matters seriously may well complicate the research design. However, these issues of privileged communication, community values, and individual rights must be respected by both the psychiatrist and the community. The alternative is a reality based on distrust and resentment. Certainly there are times when these issues may be raised with little or no foundation in fact but express instead ambivalence about the research itself. This puts a greater burden on the researcher to be certain that no violation of individual rights has occurred.

Negative community reactions to research are not always expressed directly. Underlying negative feeling about the research may be reflected in misinterpretation of preliminary results, confusion over research goals, or loss of interest in the study. Suddenly and urgently the researcher’s attention may be required for some conflicting task. Withdrawal of financial support and cutbacks in personnel or equipment may be administrative actions motivated by reality considerations or an emotionally based disapproval of the project. If such practical difficulties arise, the psychiatrist should carefully try to determine the extent to which the research is perceived as disturbing.

The usual problems of communication in any organization may increase to the point where the psychiatrist is effectively isolated from the community. As a result, his access to potentially valuable research data might be severely limited. There are several characteristic sources of such difficulty in communication. They may express the community’s uneasiness with the research itself. However, the difficulty may lie with the psychiatrist. His use of technical language and concepts unfamiliar to his non-psychiatric colleagues may significantly handicap him. This is particularly true of technical psychiatric terms which have very different non-technical meanings.

**Difficulties Confronting the Psychiatrist Himself**

While direct or indirect expression of hostility toward the research or the psychiatrist may come from those especially threatened by the research, not all criticism arises from such a source. Clearly criticism can be based on impartial judgment and be thoroughly justified. Careful consideration of each question, each issue, can give the psychiatrist and educator a mutually satisfactory understanding of the important factors involved.

We have considered some of the difficulties that can arise from the response of the educator and the institution to the process of study. The psychiatrist may also experience difficulties as a participant in research in a college setting. The psychiatrist doing research in human behavior in the restricted laboratory or treatment situation must consider many complex variables. Psychiatric research in a college where the interactions of an individual with the sociocultural milieu are in the foreground increases the number of these variables. Faced with the complexity of the field and the many pressures of the community, the psychiatrist may attribute his own difficulty in mastering the research to resistances to research in the college community. Such problems may be more realistically located in the difficulty of the research itself or in the psychiatrist’s approach. Psychiatrists are usually less intensively trained in research methods and techniques than their colleagues in the other behavioral sciences.

Research demands a commitment to its goals and effective collaboration by all the participants. It requires a readiness to bring the skills of differing professional experiences to bear in meeting the challenges, and a continuing examination of problem areas in attempting to locate realistically sources which hinder advancement of the research.
V. SUMMARY

There are major research opportunities on the campus for extending psychiatric and educational knowledge. This report has reviewed previous and current efforts and representative areas for further work. These special opportunities derive from the presence of a relatively stable, normal population living in a common environment. While this is not the only population where these factors obtain, it is a special population and represents a group of crucial concern for society. Our society has a large stake in the late adolescents, many of whom will become leaders in their later adult life. Society as a whole—not only the college—has an investment in any inquiry that will significantly enlarge our understanding of the student, the college, and the process of education.

Three particularly significant, even though obvious, factors are summarized.

First, the college or university provides an excellent setting in which to investigate the normal course of late adolescence. It is a setting in which the psychiatrist can explore the extent to which concepts derived from the treatment and study of the neurosis and psychosis can illuminate and clarify the processes and vicissitudes of normal development. A special value to psychiatry and psychoanalysis lies in the college’s ubiquitous emphasis, whether conscious or not, on ego development, ego function, and the normal adaptive maneuvers of its students.

Second, this report has stressed that the college affords a unique occasion to study the interaction of the individual with the group and the impact of the social organization on the individual’s psychological adaptation. Representative topics for inquiry might include: (a) the college’s impact on the student’s self image, on his values, on his degree of academic commitment; and (b) the various ways that the incidence of depression on a particular campus may be related to the characteristic campus patterns for enhancing self-esteem. An understanding of the interplay between internal and environmental factors precipitating the depression would have both a meaning and a usefulness, as well as a general significance, to a given college.

Third, the college or university is the logical location in which to explore the relevance of psychiatric concepts and techniques of research to the study of the educational process itself. It is the experience of this committee that the data to which the psychiatrist has access adds a significant dimension to the dynamic understanding of the process of education. We are not talking of a panacea that will resolve all paradox, but a level of data, a composite of insights concerning students that have often been omitted in previous efforts to understand what the college does for and to its students.
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<td>42</td>
<td>Some Observations on Controls in Psychiatric Research—May 1959</td>
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A complete listing of publications of the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry may be obtained upon request from the Publications Office.

Three bound volumes of reports and symposiums, covering the years 1947 to 1962, are also available and include reports which are now out of print and unavailable in any other form.