

IN THIS ISSUE

IN the paper "Social Barriers to Optimal Health," Matthew Tayback of the Baltimore City Health Department discusses ways in which social attitudes, values, and behavioral patterns interfere with preventive health programs that could raise levels of health in the population. Action for the prevention of the most urgent current health problems, such as heart disease, arteriosclerosis, cancer, and mental disorders, is dependent on individual patterns of behavior and cultural values relating to health, whereas prevention of disease in the past has been accomplished largely through immunization and control of the external physical environment. In developing programs for promotion of the health of adults and of our aging population, Dr. Tayback suggests that the public health worker should consider the contribution that can be made by the sociologist and social worker.

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In an article entitled "The Age for Neuroses," Dr. I. M. Shepherd, of the Institute of Psychiatry, Maudsley Hospital, London, and Dr. E. M. Gruenberg, of the Milbank Memorial Fund, have assembled data relating to age-specific prevalence and incidence of neuroses. The age curve for new cases and that for all diagnosed cases at a given time both rise rapidly during early adult life and then decline at older ages. The authors point out that the limited evidence available suggests that neurotic illnesses are characteristic of a particular period of the life span and are, in the mass, of short duration. The need for study of the age of onset and duration of neurotic illness is emphasized.

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"The Differential Fertility of the Negro Population, Houston, Texas, 1940-1950" is the subject of a paper prepared by Professor Jack E. Dodson of the Texas College of Arts and Industries. The data were derived from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Houston Department of Health. The author discusses 1940-1950 trends in general and marital fertility in Houston by age, color, birth order, and socio-economic status. A valuable feature of the analysis is a subdivision of the whites into "Latin White" and "Anglo-White" components. The former are those with Spanish surnames.

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The trend toward earlier marriages since 1940 has been evident in many countries. It has been particularly marked in the United States and Sweden. Sweden's vital statistics originated in the parish records system many years ago. Since 1881 the statistics on marriage have been published periodically for the country as a whole. Professor Rollin Chambliss of the University of Georgia has computed the median ages at first marriage of males and females for each year since 1881 and the results appear in his article "Median Age at First Marriage in Sweden, 1881-1953." Over the long period 1881-1940 there was not much change in the median age at marriage. Since 1940 there has been a steep decline in age at marriage for both sexes and the sex differential in median age at first marriage has been maintained.

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In an article "Some Sources of Variation in the Family Size of College Graduates," Professors Robert Gutman and Irving Bender of Dartmouth College present the results from their recent follow-up study of 101 men who graduated from an Ivy League College in 1940. The design of this study is unique. Professor Bender, a psychologist, first selected the subjects for study while they were seniors and collected much data from them in connection with his interest in the relation between certain visual and psychological factors. Fifteen years later Professors Gutman and Bender collaborated in a mailed questionnaire follow-up study which included questions regarding occupation, marriage, number of children, and others.