



IN THIS ISSUE

THE great and growing interest in mental disorders, especially in their prevention, has stimulated much epidemiological research designed to obtain evidence on the causes of different kinds of mental disorders which can be the basis for developing preventive programs. Aware of this interest and of the many recent studies which have evaluated data on associations between a variety of factors and mental disorder, in 1959 the Milbank Memorial Fund sponsored a Round Table meeting at Arden House, at which present knowledge about causation of mental disorder was discussed. In preparation for this meeting, eight distinguished authorities were asked to prepare review articles summarizing the evidence relating to different kinds of causes which had been thought to lead to mental disorders. The papers were distributed to the participants in advance of the meeting. At the meeting, the discussion of each review paper was opened by a previously designated participant; a general discussion followed; and the reviewer then added his own comments on the discussion.

In this and the following two issues of the *Quarterly* seven of the review papers, the opening discussion and a summary of the general discussion will be published. The first paper on "Genetical Etiology in Mental Illness" by Professor Jan A. Böök, was published in July, 1960. Unfortunately, the discussion of this paper was not published in the *Quarterly*, but it will be included in a volume of collected papers from the meeting which will be made available later in 1961, under the general title of **CAUSES OF MENTAL DISORDERS: A REVIEW OF EPIDEMIOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE, 1959.**

This issue of the *Quarterly* includes an introductory statement outlining the objectives of the meeting, a brief abstract of each review article and a list of the participants.

Two of the review papers, one by Professor Brian MacMahon on "Physical Damage to the Fetus" and one by Dr. George James on "The Epidemiology of Mental Disorder Associated with Damage to the Brain after Birth" appear in this issue.



Cross tabulations of regular census data by state of birth and state of residence make it possible to differentiate populations on the basis of whether they have moved from one state to another. Since 1940 each census has included a question on specific place of residence one or five years previous to the census. Here again the classifications yield information as to whether a given type of move occurred during the period considered. Occasionally private studies or sources have yielded limited data on number of moves and residence history since marriage. In a paper "Duration-of-Residence Analysis of Internal Migration in the United States," Dr. Karl E. Taeuber discusses the migration information provided by a question on duration of residence, and presents the first national migration data derived from this approach. The data are from the National Lung Cancer Mortality Study with which the author is affiliated.



It is only during a relatively short "fertile period," approximately in the middle of woman's menstrual cycle, that there is appreciable chance of conception. Research into the survivorship of sperm and ova within the female have indicated that the average length of the fertile period is almost certainly less than three days and probably less than two days. In an article "Length of Fertile Period" Dr. Robert G. Potter assembles three additional lines of evidence which collectively suggest that the fertile period is typically less than 48 hours. One includes Dr. Christopher Tietze's estimates made on the basis of data and given assumptions regarding frequency of intercourse and conception delays. The other two are Potter's and they are derived by adapting Tietze's method to data on artificial insemination by donor and to speed of conception among women

reporting different coital frequencies. More precise knowledge of the length of the fertile period would be beneficial to various fields such as the treatment of sterility, the more effective use of the rhythm method of contraception, and artificial insemination.