

## Migraine relief at fingertips

Two University of Victoria psychologists have developed a program to help those who suffer from migraine headaches.

Relief may be within reach for many of the estimated 10 to 20 per cent of people in Canada who suffer from migraine headaches, according to the UVic behavioural psychologists.

The relief for this devastating headache, which so far has no known sure cure, may be as close as the tip of a migraine victim's fingertips, said Dr. Loren Acker and Dr. John Marton.

Drs. Acker and Marton base their treatment for migraine on biofeedback. Biofeedback is defined as a method for giving people information about what is going on in their body, a method to help them learn to do the right things to help themselves.

The treatment the psychologists are developing for migraine, in a collaboration with a University of Washington psychologist, Dr. Robert Kohlenberg, requires migraine victims to pay heed to the state of blood vessel contraction and dilation in their bodies. This can be determined by regularly taking the temperature of their fingertips, which grow colder when blood vessels are contracting.

### Chilly fingers symptomatic

Chilling fingertips indicate that the body is becoming susceptible to a migraine attack, and unless action is taken, the body may soon be besieged by the throbbing head pain, blurred vision and nausea that send many migraine sufferers to their beds.

It has been known for some time, explain the psychologists, that migraine sufferers characteristically experience greater than normal blood vessel contraction in response to factors such as stress, diet or hormonal influence. The reasons may be genetic.

Drs. Acker and Marton are not offering a cure for migraine, but a biofeedback method of self-diagnosis and prevention which, they said, has had encouragingly high success rates among migraine sufferers.

"There are a lot of popular misconceptions about biofeedback, but for it to be effective, a person needs some objective measure of what is happening to the body," said Dr. Acker.

The objective measure used by the two psychologists is the biotic band, a plastic, temperature-sensitive, colour-

coded device which wraps around the finger.

In workshops held in Victoria, British Columbia, Dr. Marton teaches participants the use of the biotic band and how to bring up the temperature of the finger with biofeedback relaxation techniques, should the band indicate that a migraine attack is threatening.

Dr. Acker said preliminary results of their work tally well with the record of success reported from Seattle, where the original work on the method was begun several years ago.

Drs. Acker and Marton plan to continue to exchange data with their colleagues in Seattle.

## Antivirus developed for cattle

A University of Montreal veterinary research team has produced a vaccine to combat a common respiratory sickness in cattle.

The team led by Dr. El Ezhary has developed the vaccine to fight the syncytial virus, a contagious virus which is known to attack the pulmonary alveoli of primarily young cattle.

Studies conducted on herds in Quebec have indicated that some 36 per cent of the animals come into contact with this viral agent and those that survive are impeded in their growth.

The respiratory antivirus syncytial, the first of its kind, will be manufactured in the United States by the firm CEVA, a sub-filiate of Elf-Aquitaine of France, and will be distributed in Canada by the Quebec firm PVU (Pharmacie vétérinaire



Two interns at the University of Montreal's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine administer the new vaccine to a calf.

universelle), a licence holder of CEVA that exports its products to 22 countries.

Dr. Onil Hébert, the president of PVU, said that the new product could be on the market within six months or so. At present, Quebec does not have the equipment required to produce the vaccine on a large scale. Government approval must be obtained before the new vaccine can be marketed.

## Canadian-designed taxi ready

A Canadian company has built a new kind of taxi and is considering construction of a plant to produce the vehicles.

Final studies, undertaken by a joint venture company set up by an industrial design company GSM Design Limited of Montreal and an equipment parts manufacturer Magna International Incorporated of Toronto, show that 5 000 units could be produced in an assembly plant during the second half of 1983.

More than \$500 000 has gone into the program, with considerable support from the federal and Quebec governments. A site in Quebec will probably be chosen for the assembly plant.

The existing yellow and black prototype GSM taxi, with well over 30 000 miles on the odometer, was developed in two years. The vehicle was designed with easy access for passengers and is able to accommodate a wheelchair. GSM president Morley Smith said the design of the GSM taxi allows for six-, nine- and 12-seat versions or as a utility vehicle.

A production version of the taxi is being created by GSM. The body would be of glass fibre construction and the patented all-round bumper system would be made of urethane plastic. Chassis, engine, drive train, suspension and fittings would be standard North American-type equipment.

The vehicle is intended primarily for the shared-ride and paratransit market, particularly between airports and downtown areas; to serve the handicapped; and to replace buses in off-peak hours. It is not intended to replace the standard vehicles used for most taxi work. The cost of the vehicle is expected to be \$15 000 to \$20 000.

The taxi has been well received in the United States and Europe. GSM has also created a cab for a four-wheel-drive tractor developed by Versatile Corporation of Vancouver, the bodies and interiors of the Montreal Metro (subway) cars and the interiors of LRC trains.