

Medicine:

Medical experiment watchdog

By Joseph MacSween

Medical scientist Jacques Genest says the wisdom of society as a whole must be marshalled to guard against possible grave dangers resulting from proliferating developments in medical experimentation.

That is the thinking behind a new study centre scheduled to open soon, said Dr. Genest, director of the Clinical Research Institute of Montreal (Institut de Recherches Cliniques de Montreal), Professor of Medicine at University of Montreal and physician at Hotel Dieu Hospital.

He told a reporter the aim of the centre is to bring together international and Canadian figures from a broad range of scholarship—including philosophy, sociology, law and theology as well as medicine—for meetings and symposiums on the great questions of the day.

"Many developments are coming all at once," said Dr. Genest. "The impact on humanity may be great and must be studied in depth in a multi-disciplinary way. We wish to alert the public and governments to problems which have implications for our Canadian community and all mankind." Scientific, ethical and moral questions arising from research activity in the manipulation of genes, test-tube babies, euthanasia and psycho-surgery will be among topics studied at the centre, housed in a newly-constructed extension of the Clinical Research Institute.

Dr. Genest, 55, said many issues raised in medical experiment today have caused profound unease in numerous countries and concern all elements of society, not only medical scientists. "Contrary to some opinion, medical scientists are deeply aware of the need to become fully integrated with the larger community."

The Research Institute, which stands opposite Hotel Dieu Hospital on Pine Avenue near the heart of Montreal, has approved an initial budget for the study project. But Dr. Genest also hopes for government assistance and donations from private interests.

The fluently bilingual French-Canadian scholar received his medical degrees from University of Montreal and honorary degrees from Queens, Toronto, Laval and Sherbrooke Universities. A list of his studies, missions, fellowships, certificates, honours and awards covers 2172 pages. A companion of the Order of Canada, he lectured in the Soviet Union in 1968, the first Canadian doctor to do so under a scientific exchange agreement.

Tenatively named the Research Centre

on Medical Problems Affecting the Future of Mankind, the new venture coincides with international expressions of foreboding regarding genetic engineering and some other research fields. The French Government helped sponsor a meeting of 100 world scientists on such problems at University of Paris last autumn. The British Government appointed a working party last August to assess the risks of genetic engineering. The alarm had been raised in the United States in July by 11 eminent biologists, who asked for temporary suspension of research in certain dangerous areas of genes manipulation.

Angry Group

A form of group psychotherapy that focuses on anger has been so successful at the Royal Ottawa Hospital that it now has a waiting list, according to the psychiatrist who runs the group, Dr. H. B. Danesh.

Known as the Angry Group, its members include married couples who are angry with their partners. Members are encouraged by therapists to identify their anger and display it. The proceedings of the group are so intense that people dependent on alcohol and drugs usually can't cope and withdraw.

One young couple who were helped towards a better relationship by letting their anger rip in this way are identified by Dr. Danesh as Doug and Beth. A bright couple with university degrees, they had been arguing and fighting ever since their recent marriage and a divorce seemed imminent.

They joined the group, which meets for two-hour sessions once a week for six or seven weeks. It goes through three phases. The first is a reflective phase dealing with "How I get angry." This involves a general discussion by all participants with the focus on anger.

In the second phase, the subjects are instructed to experience anger while working on finger painting, clay modelling or drawing forms of creative expression which can help the subject feel his emotions. The third phase is the "growing out of anger" during which the patient is helped to identify his level of maturity and growth and to use new insights to improve his relations with others.

Dr. Danesh says that during the course the subjects, as in the case of Doug and Beth, find themselves growing more loving towards one another as they become aware that anger is not the opposite of love but rather an obstacle in their attempts to love. They are helped to overcome the childish conviction that feelings and thoughts of anger should be expressed physically and verbally.

He feels it is unfortunate that there is not more literature on the existence and effects of anger in society to help individuals

cope with these problems. A competitive society generates anger in many people. Some are unable to control their angry thoughts, feelings or actions and become distressed when they are convinced they lack sincerity and love.

Arctic survival cairns

A network of 100 "survival cairns" is being set up across the Canadian Arctic by the Order of St. John and a society called the Franklin Probe, which was originally set up in 1845 to search for the explorer Sir John Franklin after his disappearance on an expedition to the North West Passage.

The first of the stone cairns was set up last July at Port Leopold in the Northwest Territories, just 100 miles from the magnetic North Pole. Other locations are being worked out by the Order of St. John in co-operation with the civil and military authorities, with advice from people of northern communities and the newly formed Arctic Aviation Council.

Each cairn contains a St. John ambulance kit comprising enough equipment and concentrated food to enable one person to survive 40 days in the event of getting lost, stranded or forced down in an aircraft. Among the items included are hunting and fishing equipment, a tent, thermal blanket, axe, snares, knife, emergency location beacon, flares and bandages. The whole network is expected to be set up over a period of 10 years.

The first cairn bears a plaque in commemoration of the many Arctic explorers who have lost their lives in these vast territories.

Lost cat

A Siamese cat that jumped out of a car and got lost when her owners were on their way from Kelowna, British Columbia, to a new home in Calgary, has reappeared 18 months and 428 miles later—on the doorstep of a house they had been visiting in New Westminster before their move.

The cat, which belonged to Ken Miller, now a Calgary bank manager, jumped out of the car en route in Revelstoke. After a fruitless search, Mr. Miller and his family gave up their pet for lost. No one knows what happened to her before she turned up howling on his mother-in-law's doorstep in New Westminster, where the family stayed for a while before their move. But it is thought that the cat may have gone home to Kelowna first and proceeded to New Westminster when she found no one there.