

SEATO MEDICAL RESEARCH STUDY ON NEUROPSYCHIATRY

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Introduction Dr. Phon Sangsingkeo, consultant to the Chief of the Clinical Research Center has been developing an extensive (approximately five years) program of social psychiatric research. The Department of Neuropsychiatry is cooperating with him in this, and with his permission hopes to participate in several projects within Dr. Phon's program. The main thrust of this work will be to develop a program for facilitating the reintegration of the chronically ill person afflicted with schizophrenia back into the family in the non-urban community by supporting appropriate institutional behaviors that facilitate favorable community attitudes. This study will provide basic data about the response of the Thai community to the chronically ill schizophrenic member. Such data will be of value in the development of a community health program relevant to the needs of the chronically ill and in increasing our understanding of how illness and its cure may be influenced by and influence a wider range of human transactions in the community. The initial projects of this program should begin early in the next quarter.

The Spitzer et al., Mental Status Schedule (which records in digital form discreet clinical and behavioral observations) has been translated into Thai and the items have been matched with the English original. The translation was done by the Applied Scientific Research Corporation of Thailand. An experienced Thai psychiatrist, COL Supoch Khwanmitra, corrected and clarified the Thai translation. The instru-

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ment was also critically examined by Dr. Phon Sangsingkeo and LTC Aroon Choawanasai. Miss Ahnkana Sywraungsymun, R. N., then translated the schedule from Thai back to English under the supervision of LTC Holloway and COL Supoch, to insure that all items in the Thai version were equivalent to those in the original English version. Following extensive help in format design and proof-reading by Mrs. Boonarb Panpanya, P.H.N., Miss Khanitha Rattaseri, and Miss Vilaivun Onarut, a Thai version suitable for initial testing with patients has been developed. The development of an instruction program to train personnel administering the mental status schedule, and the experimental clinical trial of this instrument, will be initiated in the next year. The instrument should prove to be a valuable tool in teaching and systematizing detailed clinical psychiatric observation. It should also provide materials useful in transcultural comparisons of psychiatric syndromes, and should be useful in any clinical psychiatric research which requires repeated assessment of a patient's clinical status. This work complements the formal project of Biggers et al., reported below.

Psychiatric research consultation and support was provided by Harry C. Holloway, LTC, MC, to Louis Conti, CPT, MC, and LTC, Jenkins (a psychiatrist and a military historian respectively) in their work on small group interactions in selected Special Forces "A" teams in II Corps, Vietnam. This work was initiated at the request of the Commanding Officer of the 5th Special Forces Group in Nha Trang, Vietnam. The study involved the group debriefing of four Special Forces "A" teams in their base camps at regular intervals during a six month period. The debriefing techniques (suggested by David McK. Rioch, M.D.) were derived from S.L.A. Marshall's work and were carried out by an army historian (line officer) and a psychiatrist. Consultation from this department was provided during the phases of project formulation, execution, and data analysis. This work provided primary data about small group interactions and their effect upon certain phases of mission performance in the combat situation. A report (completed April 1967) is in the hands of the historical unit attached to the Headquarters of 5th Special Forces Group in Nha Trang.

The Department of Neuropsychiatry continues its interest in the fundamental problem of the structure of illness and its cure as a part of the socio-cultural behavior of a population (see Study Report by Dr. David H. Marlowe). Because of this interest, the Neuropsychiatric Department maintains informal relations with social scientists who are examining these issues in the context of their ethnographic data collection. These workers often have valuable demographic, epidemiologic and ecologic information about the areas in which they work. The following is a partial list of such researchers and the geographic areas and groups that they are working with:

Jacques Amyot, Ph.D.
Director, Institute for
Social Scientific Research,
Chulalongkorn University

Central Thai in Changwat
Ayuthaya

Clark Cunningham, Ph.D.
University of Illinois
(to arrive July 1968)

Chiang Mai Medical School
(previously worked in
Changwat Pitsanulok and
Chiang Mai with Central
and North Thai in Changwat
Chiang Mai)

Peter Hinton, M.S.
University of Sydney
(SEATO Consultant to the
Tribal Research Center)

Pwo-Karen of Changwat
Mae Hongson; Amphur
Mae Sariang

Peter Kunstadter, Ph.D.
University of Washington

Lua and Karen in Changwat
Mae Hongson

Frederic K. Lehman, Ph.D.
University of Illinois

Shan and Kayah in Changwat
Mae Hongson

Gertrude W. Marlowe, Ph.D.
University of Pennsylvania
(to depart Thailand 7 June 68)

Hollis Mentzer, M.A.
University of Washington

Douglas Miles, M.S.
Tribal Research Center
University of Sydney

Anthony Walker, T.R.C.
Oxford University

North Thai in Chiang Mai
town and in the village of
Ton Kwen Changwat Chiang Mai

Central Thai,
Changwat Lopburi

Yao in Changwat Chiang Rai

Lahu in Chiang Mai

Dr. David H. Marlowe is not listed as he is a member of SEATO Lab. There are surely other social scientists who in the course of their work are collecting data relevant to health, sickness, and healing. The list above merely represents those with whom the Department staff has been able to keep the closest contact. It should be noted that the Tribal Research center (Director, Mr. Wannat Bhruksasri) in Chiang Mai has information about some of the other researchers in the mountains of North Thailand, and Dr. Jacques Amyot knows a great deal about ongoing social scientific field work in the country.

A medical researcher who needs information about the way of life of the people or general information about the medical problems in one of the named areas may find it valuable to review the data reports and publications of anthropologists working in the area. In some cases he may wish informally to discuss his interests with a social scientist before beginning work. The department has maintained and will continue to maintain papers, reports, and ongoing contacts with social scientific field workers. This will continue to be available to interested professionals in the SEATO Medical Research Laboratory or Clinical Research Center.

In keeping with a suggestion made by Dr. David H. Marlowe, and requests by interested medical and social scientists, a conference of fourteen (14) Thai and American researchers and medical administrators was sponsored by SEATO Medical Research Laboratory to discuss topics of interest (e.g., demography, ongoing research programs pertinent to the study of illness, disease prevention, and treatment systems in communities). The Department of Neuropsychiatry organized the agenda of this meeting and is currently preparing a preliminary summary report of the conference proceedings and recommendations. It is anticipated that the entire transactions of this meeting will be made available generally during the next fiscal year.

Gertrude W. Marlowe, Ph.D., M.S. (Hygiene) of the University of Pennsylvania and Frederic K. Lehman, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Linguists at the University of Illinois, supported by Office of the Surgeon General, Medical Research and Development grants under the auspices of Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, have continued their investigations of illness and curing as phenomena occurring within larger socio-cultural frameworks. In addition, they have provided consultation and guidance to the Department of Neuropsychiatry. The data collection phase of their work will be terminated during the next year. Both Dr. Gertrude W. Marlowe and Dr. Lehman participated in "The First Symposium on Hill Tribes and North Thailand" sponsored by the Tribal Research Center of Chiang Mai. Dr. Marlowe read a paper "Economic Variety in a North Thai Village" which will be published by the Tribal Research Center and Dr. Lehman served as a discussant. Clark Cunningham, Ph.D., of Yale University, whose work in Thailand was similarly supported, has submitted a final report to the National Research Center of Thailand, and is continuing his analysis of data. Peter Kunstadter, Ph.D., of the University of Washington, (supported by National Sciences Foundation and National Institutes of Health Grants) has provided valuable consultation and guidance to the Department of Neuropsychiatry during the last year.

The importance of the information about the ways of life of the people living in North Thailand has assumed pressing importance during the last year as externally sponsored insurgency has become a manifest problem in some areas near the Laotian border. The initial research findings of Dr. Lehman, D.H. Marlowe, Cunningham, and G.W. Marlowe have been made available through public presentations, publications, and unclassified reports to the National Research Council of Thailand. Preliminary though this information is, it is sometimes the sole current information about the area or people studied. It is available for use by the Royal Thai Government in planning its medical and other programs.