

Correspondence

CLASSIFICATION AND GLOSSARY OF MENTAL DISORDERS

DEAR SIR,

The new (1965) Revision of the International Classification of Diseases, Injuries and Causes of Death (I.C.D.) has now been published. Mental disorders are listed in Section V, which contains twenty-six main psychiatric categories, 290 to 315, each of which is subdivided in up to ten subcategories. While the corresponding Section of the previous Revisions was adopted only in a few countries, the revised Section has been accepted internationally, including the United States, where a somewhat different classification had been in use.

The new Revision has met some of the criticisms levelled against the previous one. It is comprehensive and accommodates all types of mental disorders. It has long been recognized that a psychiatric classification cannot fulfil its function as a tool of communication unless the diagnostic terms are used as uniformly as is possible. To ensure this a glossary of operational definitions, i.e. of definitions to be used for the purpose of classification, is essential. Such a glossary has been prepared by the Sub-Committee on Classification of Mental Disorders of the Registrar General's Advisory Committee on Medical Nomenclature and Statistics under the chairmanship of Sir Aubrey Lewis. Here are the particulars: *A Glossary of Mental Disorders. Studies of Medical and Population Subjects No. 22. H.M.S.O., London 1968, price 6s.*

There is reason to believe that the Glossary is not being widely used. It would be a great pity if this valuable aid, which would also be of help to the postgraduate student, were to be ignored. Not only would comparisons of epidemiological data and of statistical observations concerning therapy continue to be almost meaningless, but also the possibility of improving the Classification and the Glossary by testing their usefulness would be missed.

For technical reasons, the changes in the Ministry's Diagnostic Cards which the Revised Classification makes necessary cannot be introduced before 1970. However, it would be of great advantage if psychiatrists were familiar with the Classification and the Glossary by the time it will be in official use.

My Committee has authorized me to appeal to psychiatrists to start using the Glossary, which embodies the new Revision of the Classification of Mental Disorders. The Research and Clinical Section

of the R.M.P.A. hope that psychiatrists who have used the Glossary will comment upon it. The Committee will be pleased to receive any correspondence.

PETER SAINSBURY.

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of the Research and Clinical Section.*

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FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

DEAR SIR,

I should like to draw your readers' attention to the above conference which is to take place at University College, London, from 24th to 27th September 1969. It is organized by the International Association for Suicide Prevention. Previous conferences were held at Vienna, Copenhagen, Basle and Los Angeles. Among the sponsors of the London conferences are the Presidents of the R.M.P.A., the Royal Colleges of Physicians and General Practitioners, the Royal Society of Health, the British Psycho-analytic Society and the World Federation for Mental Health.

The main themes of the conference are 'The present state of suicide prevention—an international survey' and 'Recent advances in antidepressant therapy'. Short papers on all aspects of suicide research and prevention are invited.

Requests for further information are to be addressed to Miss R. S. Addis, O.B.E., Conference Secretary, Fifth International Conference for Suicide Prevention, 43 Queen Anne Street, London, W.1.

E. STENDEL.

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ESP—A SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION

DEAR SIR,

The recent correspondence concerning parapsychology (*Journal*, November 1968, pp. 1471-80) departed from customary discussions of reviews and articles. We were surprised to find Professor Hansel invited to give his comments since we had written in response to your *review* of Professor Hansel's book,