

Brief Summary of Meeting I Attended in Mexico City

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On November 7, 1974, at the invitation of Dr. D. Nieto, Head of Department of Psychiatry, Instituto Nacional De Neurologia, Mexico City, Mexico, I participated in the symposium on schizophrenia. We celebrated the "Reunion Cientifica Commemorativa Del Decimo Aniversario" of the Instituto Nacional De Neurologia. This institute in Mexico City conducts research and treatment in neurology, neurosurgery, and psychiatry.

The scientific session was addressed by Dr. D. Nieto (Cerebral Basis of Schizophrenia), by Dr. C. Castellarios (Physiological aspects of Schizophrenia), by Dr. R. Velasco Fernandez (Infantile Schizophrenia), and by many others. What impressed me was the entire tone of the meeting. No matter whether the discussion dealt with the organic or the environmental side, it was firmly within the medical model. There was no nonsense about schizophrenogenic parents, societies, and so on, so favored by similar conferences in U.S.A. and Canada.

Dr. C. Perez De Francisco reviewed the genetics of schizophrenia, coming to the conclusion that about 50 percent of the factors for schizophrenia were genetic. Dr. Nieto reported that he had examined the brains of 10 chronic schizophrenic patients ill six to 20 years before death. He found a diffuse gliosis in the hypothalamus and surrounding areas. They were not present in normal brains. He had first reported similar findings in 1957 at the International Conference on Schizophrenia in Zurich. These pathological changes came in slowly, usually long after the disease was well established. He concluded that the organic substrate of chronic schizophrenia was as clearly established as was the organic substrate of Parkinsonism.

Dr. Castellarios, who had spent three years with WHO in Geneva, discussed the relation of three schizophrenic-like syndromes, pellagra, porphyrinuria, and epileptic psychosis to schizophrenia, indicating that these conditions could not be diagnosed in any consideration of the etiology of schizophrenia. He then outlined some biochemical aspects of brain metabolism. The vitamins were involved in these reactions. There were no papers on tranquilizers - another surprise.

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