

In Heart Attack Research

Psychological Factors Said Relevant to Study

NEW YORK — The next big statistical search for the circumstances of life which favor heart attacks should concentrate on the psychological and temperamental, in the view of the scientist who made the newest such search.

The statistics gathered and analyzed by Dr. Arnold Brown exonerated the high-fat diet as a predisposing circumstance. His statistics also exonerated alcohol, strenuous play and the long work day—and week. But they pointed at "psychological and temperamental factors."

These factors were commonly

seen in persons who are called "worriers" and in persons who have earned reputations of not being "good mixers." However, Brown found flaws in his evidence and he hoped other scientists would pin the factors down statistically.

There have been studies which indicated the high-fat diet, excessive ambition, lack of exercise and cigarette smoking as predisposing toward heart attacks. Brown conducted this newest one in Cheshire County, England, where he is chief health officer.

The statistical results showed

a significantly lessened death rate, from all causes, among those whose work involved walking or who engaged in leisurely gardening. This applied also to farmers and other outdoor workers in rural settings.

The death rate was significantly higher among sit-down workers, such as clerks, but the study showed that executive responsibility in sit-down office work did not increase the liability for heart attack—statistically.

Cigarette smokers showed a somewhat higher liability than non-smokers, but pipe-smokers

didn't. On the other hand, coffee drinkers had less liability than tea drinkers. Overweight, particularly among manual laborers, was a statistically significant factor in heart attacks. So was heredity.

Brown thought his evidence incriminating psychological and temperamental factors was "suspicious," as impressive as it was. The evidence came from the impressions the living had of themselves and the impressions relatives and friends had of the dead. That is subjective evidence and is challengeable.

Nevertheless, "a pattern does

emerge," Brown said. "Psychological factors may influence the death rate," and he hoped the next statistical investigators would produce hard facts concerning them.

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