

difficult to be exact in quantitating plasma levels below 30 ng./ml., close inspection of the results obtained indicated that in no case had MAOI administration produced a significant increase in amitriptyline or nortriptyline plasma concentrations.

It would appear from these preliminary results that the synergic effect obtained with combined antidepressant medication is due to a potentiation of effect at central noradrenergic and serotonergic neurones, rather than through any inhibition of tricyclic drug metabolism.

In this study we did not try to assess changes in the psychiatric state of patients. It would be interesting to repeat the study using either larger doses of tricyclic drug or more sensitive analytical methods, and to correlate tricyclic antidepressant plasma levels with clinical response. This matter is now under consideration. We wish to thank Dr. Pollitt for his help in this study.

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#### DEPENDENCY AND OVERPROTECTION IN BOYS WHO STEAL

DEAR SIR,

We would like to report the results of giving the Self Administered Dependency Questionnaire (SADQ) to the mothers of 42 boys coming to a child guidance clinic in Yorkshire with a main complaint of stealing. Thirty-eight other boys referred for psychiatric treatment and thirty-four boys referred for psychological testing because of educational problems were used for purposes of comparison. The questionnaire has been described previously (Berg, 1974). The SADQ was employed by one of us (H.S.) in this connection as part of a larger research project. The three groups of boys did not differ significantly on age (combined total mean age 9.5 years), social class distribution, IQ (combined total mean full scale IQ on the WISC 95.2) or RQ (combined total mean on the Schonell 78).

The group of stealers had a significantly lower mean actual communication score (2.5) than either the psychiatric (4.2) or the educational (5.3) controls. Previously 64 primary school children from the general population were found to have a mean of 6.0; S.D. = 3 (Berg, 1974). Actual affection, assistance and travel mean scores did not differ significantly. The four types of preference score (Berg and McGuire, 1974) compared across the three groups for three levels of actual score, using two-way analysis of variance, failed to show any significant differences.

The stealers were significantly antisocial in other ways and were considered to be suffering from conduct disorders. The SADQ findings suggest that conduct-disordered boys who steal may be unusually uncommunicative and their mothers unconcerned about this state of affairs.

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