STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF EGYPTIAN PARAPLEGIC PATIENTS

By HAMZA, M.D., FOUDA, M.A., D.Phys.Med., and AZEIM, S.A., M.D.
Cairo, Egypt

THIRTY patients suffering from spinal cord injuries at Agouza Rehabilitation Centre were studied both physically and psycho-socially. Investigations were carried to all patients to assess the state of their urinary system. All patients were examined Psychometrically by using Depressive scale of M.MPI and Middlesex Hospital Questionnaire.

They were compared with a group of 20 amputees present at the time of this study in our centre. Most of our patients were of young age-group 25-30 years old, mostly labourers of moderate or poor classes. Both groups had a good family support. Physically most of our paraplegics were due to complete transection, mostly at lumbar and dorsal level, the commonest cause of lesion was trauma. The study was carried on chronic spinal cord injuries patients most of them were partially dependent on their activities of daily living but our amputees patients were independent. Bladder, bowel and sexual functions were markedly disturbed. The minority of them had bladder infection, 90 per cent of them had spontaneous erection while all of them lost their ejaculation.

The reaction to the trauma was shame, despair, they had poor faith in the future.

In both groups many prefer rehabilitation, and vocational training to a new suitable job, than institutionalisation. Both groups were psychic disturbed, but paraplegics were more depressed than amputees both in percentage and depth of their depression. Depressive scale of M.MPI is significantly higher in paraplegics than amputees although both did not reach a pathological level. M.S.H.Q. level in paraplegics proved to be pathological and significantly higher than in amputees on all scales except obsession.

This study proved the impact of both the injury and more poor socio-economic conditions on determining the level of depression, which needs proper evaluation and management. The used psychometric tests proved to be sensitive in assessing the emotional upset.