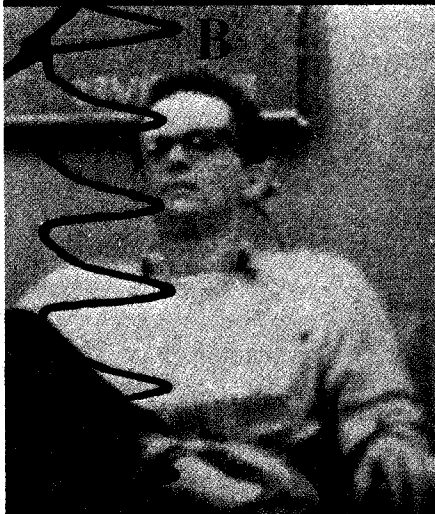


yet Subject A is overreacting to the repeated stressor... while Subject B shows less somatic reaction to the acute psychic stress.



◀ In Subject B on Valium (diazepam), respiratory measurements remain more nearly regular during second viewing of the same movie sequence. He shows less somatic reaction to the repeated stress.

Now: Valium (diazepam) effect in reducing certain somatic reactions to acute psychic stress measured quantitatively in double-blind study. Using a stress-provoking movie film, investigators at the Psychiatric and Psychosomatic Research Institute of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles have demonstrated that certain somatic changes due to acute stress can be measured and statistically evaluated. In the course of these studies, nonanxious subjects appeared to adapt to repeated stress situations, while anxious subjects, interestingly, showed reactivity on second confrontation with the same stressor film. Using this difference as a yardstick, Valium (diazepam) was compared with placebo in 36 anxious subjects under double-blind control:

1. Measuring the somatic language of psychic stress. The use of "stressor films" offers a standardized and reproducible stimulus, simulating certain real-life situations in a laboratory-controlled setting. In this study, an adventure film showed four men fighting against seemingly insurmountable odds, in constant danger of death.

2. Four physiologic parameters recorded and correlated to give a composite score reflecting certain somatic manifestations of acute stress. Polygraph measurements were made simultaneously for each subject throughout the 100-minute film. These included EKG, GSR (galvanic skin resistance), respiratory excursions and finger pulse volume.

3. Objective data statistically measure certain somatic reactions to acute stress. Polygraph tracings of respiratory excursions shown at left reveal a clear difference between Valium (diazepam) and placebo response. The tracings of all four physiological parameters were quantified and analyzed statistically. After the second showing of the film one week later, analysis of the composite ANSIR scores showed a statistically significant difference (at the $t < 0.001$ level) between subjects on Valium (diazepam) and those on placebo.

Of the scores for the four individual parameters measured, those for galvanic skin resistance (GSR) and respiratory excursions were statistically significant. Differences in cardiac activity and finger pulse volume were not significant. The only side effect reported was drowsiness in 13 subjects on Valium (diazepam) and in 7 on placebo.

4. The investigators concluded that in anxious-neurotic individuals Valium (diazepam) is effective in reducing certain autonomic nervous system reactions to acute stress.^{1,2}

In this text, adaptation, defined in psychodynamic terms, is "stimulus mastery"; reactivity signifies overreaction, from the norm, to a given stimulus.

References: 1. Clemens, T. L., and Selesnick, S. T.: *Dis. Nerv. Syst.*, 28:98, 1967. 2. Selesnick, S. T., and Clemens, T. L.: From research film "Motion Picture Films in Psychosomatic Research," available from Roche Laboratories.

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