

Jackson Inmates Volunteer For Drug Testing

JACKSON — Behind the bleak prison enclosure bare science is at work relieving human misery and prolonging life with the help of inmate volunteers. Men behind bars here take new drugs, become exposed to virus germs or go through rigorous physical tests to benefit the world outside this huge penitentiary where one drug

day lumps much like the next. Michigan's Jackson Prison is no longer unusual because of testing facilities within the prison walls, but it was considered a pioneer in 1964 when the facilities were built. Separate facilities were built—joined by a breezeway—by Parke-Davis Co. of Detroit and Upjohn Co. of Kalamazoo at a cost of about \$25,000 each and ownership turned over to the state.

Since then about 20,000 prisoners, including many who participated in more than one testing program, have helped in a variety of studies.

ALL ARE under close scientific supervision with the latest in the necessary test equipment.

But the army of volunteers makes the program possible. Without such program it would take possibly many years before some of today's so-called wonder drugs would be ready for general use, the officials say.

Prisoners are attracted to the program by pay, a break up in their colorless daily routine, a new sense of being wanted; and, recently, credit toward earning parole.

Corr Harrison, director of the Michigan Department of Corrections, says inmates play in the medical research "and for many it is the first

time they have made a contribution to society."

He said new drugs used in the tests here have already been tested on animals and in some instances humans, by the drug firms but the project here provides necessary mass testing.

POLICIES and test programs followed at the two research clinics are governed by a Protocol Review Committee, made up of staff members from Michigan medical schools and doctors in private practice. The Corrections Commission also set up a committee of medical school, State Health Department and State Corrections Department representatives to advise on general policies.

Prior to setting up the Protocol Review Committee, the testing of essentially new drugs had not been permitted.

How do the prisoners feel about the program?

A forty-three year-old inmate who was one of the first to volunteer for research studies in the new centers, explained, "I just wanted to see what it was all about—and for the money I got. Then I kept on volunteering because I liked the atmosphere. You watch television, play cards and there are no officers watching over you."

He grinned broadly and then realized with pride the role they play in the medical research "and for many it is the first

time they have made a contribution to society."

Although drug testing has been carried on in prisons since 1906, the Jackson Prison program marked the first time actual laboratories and testing rooms were built within a prison.

Similar research centers have since been built in other prisons in Oklahoma, Florida, Alabama, Philadelphia and

needed a little money and thought I would take a little rest," a 30-year-old inmate said, "I sent my mother some of the money so I'd have some when I'm paroled from here, I was in for tests."

"Most of the men don't have any income to help their families," Warden George Kropp, pointed out, "it makes them feel proud to be able to send some money home."

ALTHOUGH the two drug companies cooperate on some matters, such as screening of prisoners, they work separately on testing of compounds. Sometimes volunteers are

used as control groups and given placebos. In any case, they receive pay—Harrison describes it as "not being large enough to be considered a bribe"—which varies according to the type and extent of medication being tested.

Diets and sleeping habits are controlled, and often the volunteers stay in one of the 12-bed wards.

A sound proof room is available for conducting sleep studies. Sophisticated equipment is used to study the effects of different drugs, especially to determine if a person's ability to drive a car may be impaired, said Claude Spencer, clinical investigator for Parke-Davis.

In other instances, volunteers are being tested for the

most effective dosage of drugs used in the treatment of mental illness. Such tests as measuring finger dexterity, photographing eyes to determine the extent of stimulation or depression, and electro-encephalograms are used.

The tests are run on normal subjects.

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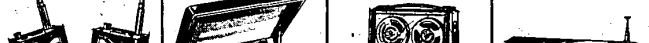
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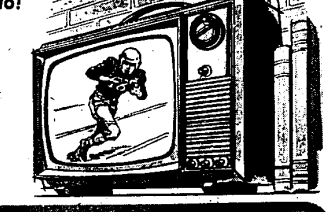
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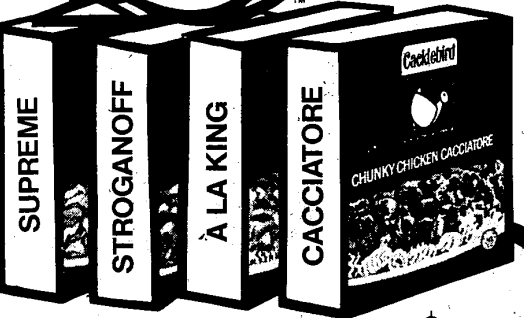
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