

When a child can't respond to a normal hearing test, what do you do? A researcher at Plymouth State Home is working on an answer. . .

Hire A Computer

By KATHY MORAN

A 22-month-old boy's mental growth was retarded and his physical growth was slowed to the level of an eight-month-old child.

His problems were partially attributed to deafness.

The child's mother had contracted rubella during the first three months of her pregnancy; this often causes deafness. With this background and the fact that the child failed to respond to auditional testing, he was almost diagnosed as deaf.

A SPEECH therapist had noticed certain signs which indicated the child might have some hearing ability, so the boy was referred to Plymouth State Home and Training School for further tests.

At the Plymouth State Home and Training School, a young researcher is developing a new testing method for use with children who are unable to cooperate with standard hearing tests. He is Dr. Donald D. Hogan of 32807 Meadowlark, Farmington.

In many cases, his testing is conducted while the child is sleeping.

Via a new testing system called Average Evoked Response, (AER), the boy was found to have some hearing ability.

The child was referred for further observation, and his case will be up soon for further investigation into ways of promoting speech development.

"The child was on the route to being misdiagnosed," Dr. Hogan said. "I think we stopped that."

But an undetermined number of other cases have not been so fortunate.

Many of the children and adults in mental institutions today should not be there, says Dr. Hogan.

DR. HOGAN believes that hearing disorders are part of the stem problems of many retarded and institutionalized people. When the disorder was not detected, the child's growth was further retarded.

"I think that there exist today some misconceptions concerning the significance that should be attached to hearing loss, deafness and organic disorders of the ear," he said.

"Too often persons charged with health care will treat ear disorders lightly because they serve as a relatively insignificant and controllable threat to the physical well-being of a patient.

"Audition takes on a new significance however, when considered as a faculty that is necessary for normal mental development.

"An undetected and untreated hearing loss may adversely influence speech development and, to some extent, language development," he said. "Disorders of intellectual and emotional development may also occur.

"The importance of performing diagnostic and treatment services early in a child's life cannot be overemphasized."

THE 36-YEAR-OLD researcher has been



DR. DONALD HOGAN prepares the equipment in his acoustical sound room for an experimental hearing

test. The window in the back opens into the room where the patient is placed. (Observer photo)

working with grants from the State Department of Mental Health and the United Cerebral Palsy Association to develop a method of testing hearing ability by recording brain waves that are stimulated when a person hears a sound.

The implications of this type of testing are far-reaching.

Dr. Hogan's hearing tests can be administered to a retarded child or any infant or child who for some reason can not or will not cooperate with the standard Pure Tone testing by indicating when they hear the sound.

In the case of a retarded child, analysis of the test will indicate whether his normal mental growth is being retarded by hearing problems.

The computers and recorders in his dimly-lit testing room look complex, but the process is relatively simple.

The patient either sits in a big black leather chair or is placed in a high-standing crib with metal bars. He wears earphones, and three electrodes are taped to his head.

WHEN THE SOUND is transmitted, the

electrodes measure the first one-second response stimulated in the brain. The response is then recorded in a computer.

By taking a series of these tests, Dr. Hogan can tell whether the child actually heard the tone or whether outside noise stimulated the response.

Dr. Hogan, who stumbled on his career by accident, believes that the retarded population needs a method of determining hearing disorders as a means of helping in rehabilitation.

Through his experimental testing program, Dr. Hogan can test children while they are sleeping without requiring them to participate in the normal hearing tests.

The researcher stands six feet tall and looks more like a television announcer, a profession he almost chose, than a researcher in audiology for the retarded.

He worked his way through school as a

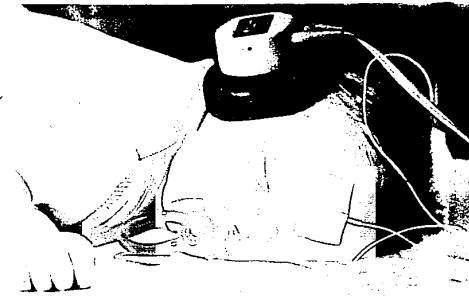
'COG No Threat To City Blacks'

A theory that regional governmental agencies are a threat to black control of central cities has been branded as "nonsense" by Kent Mathewson, president of Metropolitan Fund, Inc., in a speech last week to the National Municipal League.

Reacting to a suggestion by two Columbia University sociologists that black leaders in central cities should vigorously oppose regional problem solving, Mathewson characterized the idea as "tantamount to recommending urban suicide."

Rather, Mathewson said, the leaders of all central cities, black or white should be seeking help of their suburban neighbors via such regional agencies as the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

CITING THIS nation's historic process of providing leftover clothing, food, housing, and schools to black citizens, the Metropolitan Fund president called on the assembled municipal leaders to recognize



OBLIVIOUS TO WHAT is happening, this four-week-old boy is having his hearing tested. The electrode on his forehead is one of three that measure the heart and respiration response stimulated when a sound is heard. (Observer photo)

television engineer, director and staff announcer and graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in radio and television in 1960 from the University of Arkansas.

HE STUMBLED on his career by accident when taking a speech correction course to fulfill his speech requirements. When a piece of their equipment broke down and Dr. Hogan fixed it, his professor suggested he might have the interest and background to go into audiology.

That is where it started, and it progressed with master's and doctoral degrees in audiology from Purdue University. Since then his work has been in various aspects of audiology culminating in the research position at Plymouth State Home.

But the field is still wide open.

Even if Dr. Hogan can perfect the testing aspect, there is the equally important aspect of treatment for the hearing handicapped mentally retarded that is often underrated.

Dr. Hogan said that even if they can learn to diagnose the audiological problems in the mentally retarded, the next problem is where to send them for care. Right now the field needs specially trained researchers and clinicians.

Audiology research also is dependent on contributions from community organizations to buy some of the necessary equipment. Dr. Hogan's equipment was acquired piecemeal through contributions of local groups.

Bloodmobile Will Visit GC

A Red Cross bloodmobile will be held in Garden City on Wednesday, Sept. 2, from 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the Garden City Knights of Columbus Hall, 30759 Ford Rd. For an appointment to donate, call the Red Cross Northwest Regional office, 422-2787.

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BALL TWO! -- Umpire Keith (Corky) Thibodeau, of 25872 Beecham, Farmington, calls 'em as he sees 'em at the Muscular dystrophy summer camp near Port Huron. A Vietnam veteran, Keith is a volunteer counselor at the week-long camp, Susan Blyth, of 37820 Ladywood, Livonia, is a volunteer camp attendant. She serves as the arms and legs of the young muscular dystrophy patients.