

# NIH RESEARCH FOR HEALTH

A REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH  
BETHESDA, MARYLAND

## Epilepsy

The young man's body stiffened, his arms began to thrash about, the people around him shifted uneasily. As he began to fall forward off the bus seat, an alert Navy corpsman caught him. Cradling his head, the medic quickly eased the man to the floor and protected him during his seizure.

In a few minutes the young man regained consciousness and said, "This never happened to me before." The sailor suggested that he see a doctor.

At the hospital the young man, whom we will call Tom, was referred to the epilepsy clinic where patients of all ages were waiting. After examining Tom, the brain specialists (neurologists) ordered electrical recordings of his brain waves. Then the doctors prescribed special drugs for him which they expected would prevent his convulsions if taken faithfully. Thanks to modern medicine, Tom now lives comfortably without seizures.

This man, who experienced an epileptic seizure, is one of a million Americans who today can lead normal lives because their seizures can be controlled by use of various drugs.

"Epilepsy" refers to a group of disorders which have the common characteristic of sudden, repeated electrical overactivity of an area of the brain. It can result from many different diseases which affect the brain. Often no cause can be found.

Part of the problem in finding the causes of epilepsy is the intricate nature of the brain's function. Science has ushered in a new era in the study of nerve cell activity underlying normal and abnormal brain function. Use of instruments makes possible detection of changes from the normal intercell electrical patterns in the brain.

One such instrument, the electroencephalograph (EEG), makes a record of shifts of electrical energy in groups of brain cells. With the EEG it is possible to make recordings through the scalp without discomfort to the patient. In nearly all epilepsy patients,

unusual electrical patterns appear in the EEG record.

In the majority of epilepsy patients in which these electrical abnormalities are well localized, the EEG can assist the doctor in determining the specific area of the brain within which the electrical "storm" originated.

Now research has developed a fine electrode so thin it can record the electrical activity of a single brain cell. The micro-electrode helps researchers understand basic functions of the various brain structures.

This technical advance increases the accuracy of drug tests on animal with experimentally-produced epilepsy. These drugs, which doctors hope will reduce seizures, can then be safely used to treat epilepsy patients.

Fever is the most common cause of seizures in babies. A recent discovery which may help prevent some infant seizures is that some of these convulsions result from alteration of the body's ability to regulate its mineral and water balance. When physicians correct these changed balances, they can reduce the chances of repeated seizures in children.

New hope for the epilepsy patient stems from the long efforts of physicians and research scientists. For more information on epilepsy, write to this newspaper for a free copy of the publication, "Epilepsy, Hope Through Research." 226-NDB-1268-B

For more information, write to Research for Health, NIH, Bethesda, Maryland 20014, for a free copy of "Epilepsy, Hope Through Research."

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## Sunday School Lesson

Continued from Page 2

the cross of Jesus Christ. The death that the sinless Son of God died upon it gives eternal life to all who are saved through faith in Christ. His death laid the foundation for His resurrection, and for hope for mankind. Out of the terrible hate that perpetrated this atrocity sprang the demonstration of the greatest, most selfless love the world has ever known—the love of God for man. This Book is saying something of importance to us. It is saying that God will never abandon His people. It asserts, unequivocally, that ALL people—regardless of race, color or creed—will share in this Divine love and reward. All who have committed themselves to God, and to His service, will participate in this great promise.

We, truly, have a long way to go to make ourselves worthy of the Promised Land. We have no time to lose—we must start working NOW!

(These comments are based on outlines of the International Sunday School Lessons, copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education, and used by permission).

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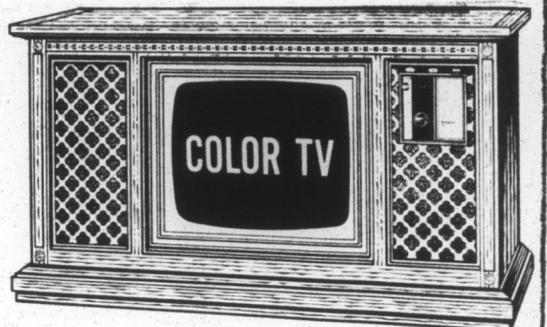


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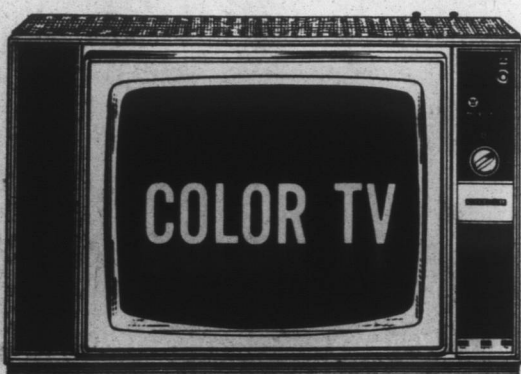


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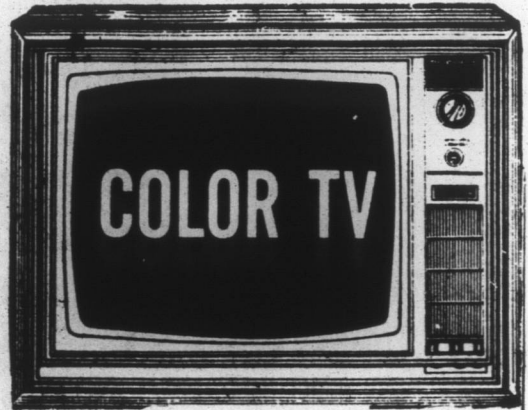


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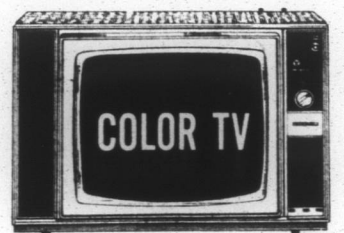


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