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Psychotic and Neurotic Illnesses in Twins.

Author(s) : [SLATER, E.](#)

Book : [Med. Res. Council Spec. Rep. Ser. No. 278.](#) 1953 pp.vi + 385 pp. ref.64

Abstract : This volume records in detail the results of a most carefully planned and executed study of nearly 300 pairs of twins. Twins were systematically collected from a large hospital population, and other relatives were included as well as the community. The diagnosis of the type of twinning was investigated very carefully. It had to be concluded that with six pairs ovularity was doubtful. This is probably as good as can be attained. It is always wise to recognize that even with the most elaborate procedures a very small proportion of pairs cannot be certainly classified as identical or fraternal, and it is much better to admit this than to classify them in a group to which it is thought they most probably belong. There is a section c

finger prints which is very interesting as a study in technique, though from point of view of diagnosing the type of twinning it is rather disappointing the discriminant function which emerges gives a rate of misclassification of 16 per cent. More than half the pairs were based on a schizophrenic patient. Of the identical twins 76 per cent. were concordant. Some of the remainder showed lesser mental illness but some were entirely normal. The concordance rate for fraternal co-twins was 50 per cent. The difference was less in the other kinds of mental illness.

Dr. Slater makes the excellent point that although twin studies, combined with family studies, are with certain limitations very valuable in investigating the effects of heredity and environment, they are by no means so suitable for throwing light on the transmission of the genetic factors involved. He is rightly cautious here and does not commit himself to any theories.

Several admirable features make the book a most valuable source of material. It is likely to be extensively used and consulted for many years to come. One of the most is the excellence and clarity of the review of the literature. Most useful of all is the full presentation of the case histories. These are given *in extenso* for a number of uniovular twins, the pairs of doubtful ovularity and for concordant or other various binovular pairs. The remainder are given in relatively full tabular form. The case histories occupy no less than 270 pages and, most commendably, have not been reduced to a smaller print. *J. A. Fraser Roberts.*

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