

Researchers: chemical appears to improve memory

OMAHA—Creighton University researchers say they have discovered an organic chemical compound that apparently improves memory and intellectual performances that normally deteriorate with age.

Dr. Nikolaus Hansl, associate professor of medical chemistry and a member of the team of scientists, said the compound, known as PRL-8-53, counters the destruction of certain chemical pathways in the brain by "making up the slack chemically."

Wednesday that many Americans may face "a cruel choice between food or heat" this winter because home heating oil costs will be more than 50 percent higher than last year.

Despite the rising costs, Deputy Energy Secretary John F. O'Leary told a congressional hearing that homeowners who heat with oil will have more than enough to get through the winter.

O'Leary said the Carter administration soon will ask Congress for \$150 million more than the \$250 million

already appropriated for energy assistance to low-income families to compensate for higher heating oil costs.

O'Leary testified as a new Library of Congress study claimed that heating oil consumers have been charged \$1 billion more in higher prices over the past year than can be justified by inflation in higher crude oil costs.

The study said heating oil prices rose from 49 cents a gallon last September to 80.8 cents last month. Of this increase, only 14.8 cents could be attributed to higher crude oil costs, the report said.

a.p. datelines

In a clinical study at Creighton, 58 college students performed better on intellectual tasks when they were given the compound than when they were not, Hansl said.

He described the compound as similar to an amino acid.

In another study published in 1978, researchers compared the compound's effects on performance of college students with that of persons who were over 30 years old.

The participants were asked to remember lists of "nonsense syllables," geometric objects and other tasks, Hansl said.

The older group showed a 130 to 140 percent greater improvement in memory than the college students he said.

He said the effect of the compound lasted about seven hours, and added that even after the effect faded, memory was better.

Hansl said the compound could help "the geriatric population—anyone over 30—such as the elderly man who forgets his glasses or loses a thought in mid-sentence. I would like to make them more self-sufficient."

But Hansl added there have been no indications that persons with brain damage could benefit from the compound.

Vietnamese shot

WASHINGTON—Recent refugees report many people have been shot while trying to escape Vietnam since the U.N.-sponsored Geneva conference on the "boat people," Carter administration sources said Wednesday.

Since the conference in mid-July, the Hanoi government has imposed harsh penalties for attempted escapes and clamped down on life in the country, refugees were quoted as telling U.S. officials.

The Vietnamese government has increased patrols and has applied stricter security controls, refugees said.

The sources, who declined to be named, indicated Vietnamese refugees were questioned at camps in Southeast Asia. U.S. Navy ships and patrol planes have been helping boatloads of refugees in the South China Sea reach safety.

One group, which left Vietnam in August, claimed that escape has been made more difficult than it was a year ago, U.S. sources said.

Refugees who have escaped since July told U.S. officials that Communist Party officials called people together and advised them to ignore U.N. promises.

They were warned that those who left Vietnam would become slaves of foreigners," one source said.

Soviet troops

WASHINGTON—Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance said Wednesday the United States "will not be satisfied with the maintenance of the status quo" regarding Soviet combat troops stationed in Cuba.

Vance said the Soviet troop presence "will affect Soviet-American relations."

He did not rule out the possibility that the situation would influence Senate action on the strategic arms limitation treaty with the Soviet Union.

Vance said at a news conference he has asked Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin to return to the United States from vacation as soon as possible to discuss the troop presence.

In the meantime, he said, the Carter administration believes the Senate's ratification hearings on the SALT II treaty should go forward. But Vance stopped short of saying the Senate should vote to ratify the treaty regardless of the outcome of the issue of Soviet troops in Cuba.

He refused to say what will satisfy the administration regarding the troops, although he noted it was the combat capability of the troops that was of concern to the administration.

No booze

GRAND ISLAND—An ordinance banning alcohol from city parks has been approved by the Grand Island City Council.

The ban on alcohol replaces a city ordinance that allows possession of alcohol in city parks but no consumption.

Police Chief Howard Bacon told the council the current ordinance is unenforceable.

Americans face choice

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