

TO: *Reader*
FROM: *Editor*

Prescribe TV For Your M.D.

PS EDITORS disregard many predictions—often they cannot be proved true or false for a long time—but pass on to you those that seem most plausible and interesting. In February, 1947, we reported Dr. Vladimir K. Zworykin's prophecy that television might change one's whole concept of educational techniques, especially in medicine. We thought then of the need for more doctors and hoped it might make larger classes possible in the medical schools. That seems less likely now, but TV has turned out to be an extremely valuable means of keeping doctors up to date after they leave school.

With nearly 1,000 doctors, I looked over the shoulder of Dr. Edwin J. Fellows this spring while he demonstrated the effects of some new drugs in the Smith, Kline & French laboratories in Philadelphia. Only a few men could have crowded around Dr. Fellows' animals and apparatus, but three television screens—each one as big as a bedsheet—enabled an auditorium full of doctors to study his work.

First he injected a chemical compound intended to relieve nasal congestion into an anesthetized cat. The cat's reactions showed its systemic, or over-all, effects. Then he permitted an anesthetized dog to breathe the stuff, and measured the changes within the dog's nose electrically by means of two electrodes taped to the dog's head.

To show a drug's effects on activity, Dr. Fellows used four rats. He placed each one in a cage mounted on sponge rubber and so arranged that every little movement of the rat increased the charge in an electrical



Four rats watched by 1,000 doctors.

condenser. The condensers then guided four pencils that recorded the rats' friskiness.

A third experiment was performed with two rabbits. Each was suspended in a cradle and given an electric shock. One rabbit's convulsion lasted longer and was followed by more rigidity than that of the other rabbit. The latter had been given a drug that may help victims of epilepsy.

One of the physicians fascinated by the TV view of this research told me afterwards that he had learned more by "making the rounds" of patients in a hospital with a professor than in any other way. He then pointed out that a TV camera also can follow a great doctor on his rounds and show many other doctors what he does. This, too, has been done.

Next month, 12,000 doctors at the American Medical Association meeting in Atlantic City will be shown TV close-ups of the hands of University of Pennsylvania surgeons at work in their operating rooms. Color television is to be used then.

Dr. Morris Fishbein of the AMA calls the electric light the greatest invention in medicine because it enables doctors to see into the body's openings. By also helping them peer into the laboratories of pharmaceutical pioneers, the clinics of specialists, and the incisions of successful surgeons, TV is now showing the doctors what it's best to do about the troubles they discover with their many little electric lights.

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