

Eye Test Reported To Alert Doctors On Schizophrenia

CHICAGO, Aug. 3 (AP) — University of Chicago researchers say they have found an eye test that can identify persons prone to schizophrenia before they get sick.

Schizophrenia is a severe and widespread emotional disturbance. It involves a retreat from reality with disordered thinking and delusions and hallucinations.

The Chicago report says that persons with an inherited tendency toward schizophrenia can be identified with a test involving measurement of eyeball movements while the persons are watching a swinging pendulum.

The report, by Dr. Philip S. Holzman and his colleagues, appears in the August issue of *The Archives of General Psychiatry*, published by the American Medical Association.

Working with Dr. Holzman were Dr. Leonard R. Proctor, Deborah L. Levy, Nicholas J. Yassillo, Dr. Herbert Y. Meltzer and Stephen W. Hurt.

The ability to identify family members whose eyeball movements show the same unusual pattern found in schizophrenics means it may now be possible to treat such persons before they manifest the disease. Several drugs are available for control of the disease.

When schizophrenics watched a pendulum swing, their so-called eyeball pursuit of the moving object was halting rather than smooth.

These movements can be measured with tiny electrodes attached to the edge of the eye.

The researchers studied 103 psychiatric patients, 53 of their relatives and 72 persons who were not patients and who were recruited from the general population.

Fifty-two per cent of patients who recently were diagnosed as schizophrenics and 86 per cent of long-term schizophrenic patients had tracking problems; 45 per cent of the relatives of schizophrenic patients showed deviant eye tracking, compared with 10.5 per cent of relatives of other psychiatric patients who were not schizophrenic.

Of the normal group of subjects, only 8.3 per cent had trouble.