

*J. Leters*

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Dear Dr. Kiloh,

Thank you for sending me the review, "ECT: Its Place and Value in Present Day Psychiatry". I found it thorough and detailed, and congratulate you on the effort. While I agree with most of what is included, including the conclusions, there is some question about our understanding of the mode of action.

It seems to me that one can deduce much about the efficacy of convulsive therapy from the information in your review-- notably the importance of the bilateral central seizure, the equivalence of inductions, the need for multiple seizures, the predictors of outcome, the diagnostic classes which respond, and the neurophysiological evidence of the importance of bilateral EEG changes in the assessment of efficacy. From these observations, it seems to me that there must be an influence on some centrencephalic structure, an influence which is expressed after a number of seizures, and therefore in the persistent biochemical changes.

It has been the influence of the neuroendocrinologists that suggests the next step in the process. The neuroendocrine changes which mark endogenous depression have been defined in part; and in your excellent review of the predictors of ECT, you noted that the vegetative symptoms are the best predictors of ECT outcome. These observations, plus the notes on changes in calcium metabolism and the blood brain barrier have led me (and others, as Jan Otto Ottosson) to define the present view of the mode of action of convulsive therapy in terms of the hypothalamic effects. Surely, in relation to our knowledge of the mode of action of other psychiatric therapies, we are farther along in convulsive therapy, and a summary of your views is the only omission in your report which I missed.

One other question of persistent concern is the role of maintenance ECT. It is not clear from the literature whether such treatments are effective, for whom, and at what rates. Their role should be clarified

in the review.

I am acquainted with most of the citations but that of Osselton which you cite as personal communication, 1978. I would be grateful if this report is published, if you will let me know the citation.

My work on the Task Force and the reviews which you cite led me to expand the reports into a volume which will be published by Raven Press next month. IN "Convulsive Therapy: Theory and Practice", I expanded on the theoretic background of the process and (hopefully) present a cogent theory of mode of action which is quite testable.

When I spoke to Graham Burrows in Vienna, I had hoped it would be possible to come to Australia this year, and I had hoped to visit with you. That seems unfeasible at this time. Should you be coming to the States, let me know and I will be pleased to arrange for you to visit us, to discuss this and other similar issues.

Thank you again for sending the preprint. I look forward to its publication.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.  
Professor of Psychiatry