

JELL-O TEST FINDS LIFELIKE SIGNAL

Blob Gives Confusing Signs in Brain Wave Analysis

By **BOYCE RENSBERGER**

An Ontario neurologist made a brain wave analysis of a blob of lime Jell-o and obtained readings that he said could be mistaken as evidence of life.

The electroencephalogram, or EEG, experiment was made in the intensive care ward of a hospital, and the neurologist said the squiggly line it produced actually reflected stray electrical signals given off by nearby respirators, intravenous

feeders and human activity.

The neurologist said that similar electrical artifacts interfering with a real EEG test could confuse doctors into believing that a person's brain was still living when, in fact, it might be as lifeless as the Jell-o.

Definition of Death

The experiment was conducted by Dr. Adrian R. M. Upton, associate professor of medicine (neurology) at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. He described his experiment at a medical meeting in San Francisco. Details and a reproduction of the EEG readout were published in the March 3 issue of Medical Tribune, a newspaper circulated to doctors.

To make the experiment Dr. Upton used a hemisphere of Jell-o molded in a bowl and turned out on a dish. He placed EEG electrodes on the gelatin

in positions corresponding to the conventional sites used on the scalp of actual patients.

The definition of death has been under review for several years but many institutions rely on the so-called Harvard criteria for brain death. These include a flat EEG readout—a straight line instead of the jagged one produced when the electrical activity of a living brain is going on.

One problem, Dr. Upton said, is that "it's extremely difficult to get a flat EEG, even in the presence of brain death, because of artifacts." "There are hundreds of these artifacts—tongue movements, sweat, microreflexes, I.V. (intravenous drips,) respirators, people walking around in the I.C.U. [intensive care unit], paging systems, various monitors—and a good technologist is well aware of them," he said.

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