

PROGRAM OFFERED FOR DRUG ADDICTS

Psychiatrist Has Plan for Treatment and Rehabilitation That Covers Every Phase

This is the fifth in a series of six articles on the problems of narcotics addicts as told to a Times reporter by doctors, law enforcement officers and the addicts themselves.

BY HARRY NELSON

"Although a person can't let his heart get away with his head when dealing with these people, I can't help but believe we leave addicts little choice but to remain addicts."

This is how Dr. Stuart Knox, a psychiatrist who is chairman of the Los Angeles County Medical Association's committee on narcotics and alcoholism, sees the narcotics addiction situation today.

"Addicts either continue with the habit, unnoticed by the law, or else they are apprehended and forced to quit while in jail or a hospital," he says.

"This course of action encourages the recruitment of new victims. As addicts are arrested, the pushers (sellers) seek new victims as customers. When the old addict is released three months, six months or a year later, the

pusher begins working on him again.

"Unless the addict has help from someone — a psychiatrist, a sympathetic parole officer or Narcotics Anonymous—he will sooner or later give in to the emotional pressures that caused him to start taking in the first place."

Program Ready

Unlike many persons who have become interested in this problem, Dr. Knox has a treatment and rehabilitation program which is complete in every respect: physical, psychological, social and financial.

The only trouble is that the program is not in effect yet.

It takes more than a couple of tirelessly working doctors to execute a program of the scope that Dr. Knox envisions.

He envisions clinics where addicts could be given an enzyme treatment which carries them through the critical period of withdrawal in five to seven days.

He plans other clinics for psychotherapy and medical therapy. Rehabilitation centers where addicts could be given vocational testing and training. And the all-important public relations services to provide employer and public education and family relations counseling.

The basis of his medical therapy is a new concept of the chemical mechanisms of

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addiction. This concept is based on the assumption that narcotic alkaloids interfere with the nervous system metabolism, as indicated by their suppression of nervous response (analgesia) and by the obvious occurrence of severe reactions when these alkaloids are suddenly withdrawn.

Since the brain tissue gets its energy exclusively from the oxidation of carbohydrates, Dr. Knox has further assumed that heroin alkaloids interfere with carbohydrate metabolism.

Nervous Reaction

Theoretically, he and his associates reasoned, addicts could be spared the nervous reactions resulting from abrupt withdrawal of narcotics if carbohydrate metabolism could be sufficiently improved by artificial means.

The human body has natural enzymes which carry on the work of carbohydrate metabolism, but, the doctor believes, drugs usurp the function of these enzymes. To help the nervous system assimilate and utilize these natural enzymes, Dr. Knox and his co-workers withdrew a group of addicts from narcotics and replaced the drugs with two synthetic enzymes, ethylene disulphonate and adenosine triphosphate.

In his words, the response engenders a "temptation to be highly enthusiastic."

Enzyme Treatment

When the enzyme treatment was available once or twice daily, there was no discomfort and all five heroin patients tested were able to carry on their normal work responsibilities. When circumstances prevented the regular administration of the enzymes, withdrawal symptoms were noted at once but were relieved by administration of more enzymes.

Dr. Knox admits that his experiment was not scientifically controlled. But he says that it is apparent that "cures," fortified by intelligent psychotherapeutic and rehabilitation efforts, could be effected in a system of outpatient clinics strategically situated throughout the area.

Would Reduce Hazards

"These clinics," he says, "could quickly reduce the social and health hazards attendant on narcotic addiction."

In order to be assured that the addict was not administering narcotics to himself while taking treatments at



EXPERT -- Dr. Stuart Knox offers program to help narcotics addicts.

Times photo

the clinic, Dr. Knox would make it a proviso that twice-weekly Nalline tests be made for one year. Nalline is a drug that brings on withdrawal symptoms if the person has been using narcotics.

Dr. Knox's system for financing the clinics and other facilities would be three-fold. First, a fine of \$10 a week for two years for all offenders in the program. Second, a \$10 weekly fee from all voluntary registrants. Third, funds from interested public and private agencies.

Existing legislation prevents any use of coercion to require addicts to take the treatments. But Dr. Knox says there are plenty of parolees and probationers to work on in the meantime, and, of course, any volunteers who wish to take the treatment.

Narcotics Anonymous would play an important part in the psychological and social phases of the Knox program — especially in counseling and helping the addict to get employment.

Narcotics Anonymous is eager to help.

Dr. Knox is waiting for further support.

Tomorrow: What is the final answer to the dope problem?