

FOR POSSIBLE NEWS RELEASE

Since November 30, 1951, the Medical Counseling Clinic, established in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Illinois College of Medicine, has been making intensive psychological, psychiatric and social service studies of male adolescents who have been users of narcotic drugs.

Thus far the largest single source of patients has been the Family Court, although an almost equal number have been self-referrals.

The data obtained from each patient and his relatives, usually the mother, are recorded and periodically analyzed, particularly with regard to the early home situation, personality factors, and the reactions to problems which have arisen in each individual's life situation.

In a few selected cases, treatment in the form of psychotherapy is given, with the aim of determining whether the young drug user will respond to this form of therapy. In addition, other rehabilitative measures are used, such as referral to the State Employment Service, vocational guidance, school placement, etc.

At the present time, we are working toward a refinement of the definition of drug addiction, as it applies to individual cases. It is apparent that a large number of so-called drug addicts among the adolescent group are actually not addicted to narcotic drugs, but are simply drug users on an occasional basis, which is only a part of their adolescent acting-out behavior, rather than true of drug addiction. Often they are unmotivated, immature persons with strong cravings for gratification, and when drugs are easily available, they may resort to them as one means of meeting frustration.

Because of the intensive work required if we are to gain fundamental knowledge about personality aspects of drug addiction, this clinic has been, and will be, limited to the treatment and study of comparatively few cases, but two other clinics in the general system offer wider treatment service.