

withdrawal period is characteristically a time of depression, both psychic and physical, and this depression probably reinforces the drive to continue the drug. However, the withdrawal of amphetamine is not comparable to the withdrawal of morphine, barbiturates, alcohol and other substances which create physical dependence. It is never life-threatening and requires psychologic rather than supportive medical therapy.

Discussion of the last use on the list — the abuse of the drugs obtained most often through illicit channels to induce hallucinatory experiences — being the major subject of this book will be brief since it will be covered extensively in other chapters. From a social viewpoint it falls into an entirely different category than other situations which we have described. Although chronic amphetamine poisoning may be associated with harm to the individual, rarely does the amphetamine dependent individual represent a social menace. Even more rarely could the spree abuse of amphetamines by the street addicts be traced to prior medical use or misuse by the physician. Such abuse could conceivably, however, find its origin in any situation which involves the illicit supply of these drugs whether this be middle age women who learned to abuse the drug in a phony obesity clinic, a truck driver, or even a student.

In closing, it should be pointed out that the amphetamine problem is only one facet of a much larger drug abuse problem which probably involves at least 5 per cent of the adult population of the United States. The same factors, emotional immaturity becoming manifest more commonly in unfavorable environmental circumstances and precipitated by stressful situations, are common to all types of drug abuse and require the same type of treatment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Educate and reeducate those who have legal access to these drugs, i.e., physicians, dentists, veterinarians, nurses and the pharmacists who fill prescriptions, to the hazards of loose and illegal prescribing, dispensing and handling of these drugs.

2. Educate the public to the medical hazards of drug abuse and the characteristics of each type of drug abuse through the news