

(3) a psychic dependence on the effects of the drug related to a subjective and individual appreciation of the drug's effects ; and

(4) general absence of physical dependence so that there is no characteristic abstinence syndrome when the drug is discontinued.

Drug dependence of cannabis type is described as a state arising from repeated administration of cannabis or cannabis substances, which in some areas is almost exclusively periodic, in others more continuous. Its characteristics include :

(1) a desire (or need) for repeated administration of the drug on account of its subjective effects, including the feeling of enhanced capabilities ;

(2) little or no tendency to increase the dose, since there is little or no development of tolerance ;

(3) a psychic dependence on the effects of the drug related to subjective and individual appreciation of those effects ;

(4) absence of physical dependence so that there is no definite and characteristic abstinence syndrome when the drug is discontinued.

These are concise descriptions which could be expanded, particularly with reference to differences in degree according to dose and duration of administration and to potency among agents within a particular type. The differences between morphine and codeine are a good example of the latter. Descriptions of drug dependence of other types could be written, e.g., for certain sedatives not chemically classified as barbiturates, or for alcohol, to name only two. The characteristics of dependence of the non-barbiturate sedative type are essentially identical with the characteristics of dependence of the barbiturate type and a separate description seems at present unnecessary. Alcohol is outside the terms of reference of this expert committee, but is nevertheless an agent that can admittedly cause psychic and physical dependence.

All the descriptions of types of drug dependence have been confined to medical aspects only, but socio-economic characteristics and implications should not be overlooked. They vary according to the drug type and there are variations in the individual and social harm that accompany drug dependence of different types :

With morphine, the harm to the individual is in the main indirect, arising from preoccupation with drug taking ; personal neglect, malnutrition and infection are frequent consequences. For society also, the harm may be related to the preoccupation of the individual with drug taking ; disruption of interpersonal relationships, economic loss, and crimes against property are frequent consequences.

With the barbiturates, the detrimental effect on the individual stems in part from his preoccupation with drug taking, but more particularly from