

However we try to minimize or rationalize the figures, the fact remains that if any other disease reached such stratospheric proportions, a national emergency would be declared.

One year later, due to the advent of chemopsychiatry and the improvement made in other forms of treatment, psychiatric hospitals became able to discharge patients at an unprecedented rate. In 1956, for the first time in 175 years, the number of patients in U.S. psychiatric hospitals began to decline. By 1963, a U.S. Senate committee noted "with pleasure" continued progress in the field of mental health. For the seventh straight calendar year the population of mental institutions dropped, this time by the largest number in any year to date, leaving 516,000 patients in the institutions in December 1962.

Senator NELSON. What is the best estimate of the total, the maximum total number we ever reached and in what year, do you recall?

Dr. AYD. If I may, sir, I can show this with a chart.

Senator NELSON. Fine.

Dr. AYD. This is getting a little ahead of schedule but to answer your question I will be glad to do that.

As I mentioned, for 175 years the patient population had been going up. Now, this chart,¹ sir, demonstrates the patients, number of patients in thousands, so that you can see in 1950 we had 511,000 patients confined.

Senator NELSON. 511?

Dr. AYD. 511,000.

Senator NELSON. Is that the top, the highest figure?

Dr. AYD. The top figure was 559,000 in 1955. You see, it was going up from 511,000 in 1950, 1951, 518,000; 1952, 530,000; 1953, 543,000; 1954, 552,000; 1955, 559,000 patients.

Now, in 1955 the tranquilizers were first being used on a large scale in psychiatric hospitals in the United States, and immediately look what happened. In one year we dropped from 559,000 patients down to 551,000 patients, and as this chart shows, it has continued to decline right on down.

I apologize for not having for you, because the figures are not yet released by the National Institute of Mental Health, the 1968 figures and unfortunately, I got the 1967 ones too late to put on this particular chart.

But let me say that the 1967 figures show that the resident population had dropped again, this time by 26,000, to an all time low of 426,000 patients.

Mr. GORDON. Doctor, may I ask a question?

Dr. AYD. Yes, sir.

Mr. GORDON. Do the drugs relieve the symptoms or do they actually cure mental diseases?

Dr. AYD. I would have to say in all honesty that the drugs do for the psychiatric patient what practically speaking all therapies do for all other patients. They do not cure. They relieve symptoms, minimize disability, they rehabilitate.

We do not cure diabetes. We do not cure cancer at this moment. We do not cure tuberculosis, nephritis, and things of this sort. We do our best to rehabilitate.

¹ See p. 4172, *infra*.