

METHEDRINE • GOOFBALLS • HEROIN • SEDATIVES • SLEEPING PILLS •
 DOWNERS • THE PILL • BENNIES • TRANQUILIZERS • KIF • ASPIRIN • HASH • BENZEDRINE •
 WEED • DEXEDRINE • TEA • DIET PILL • POT • HALLUCINOGEN • STICKS
 LSD • MARIJUANA • CODEINE • AMPHETAMINE • MORPHINE • BARBITURATE • CANNABIS

Drug Education

By Connie Burke Ruggles

LSD • Marihuana • Codeine • Amphetamine • Morphine • Barbiturate • Smack • Methedrine • Goofballs • Heroin • Sedatives • Sleeping Pills • Downers • STP

From the time they're old enough to swallow, today's children are popping tasty, pre-sweetened, cleverly shaped, chewable pills as actively as their older and logically more pill-prone parents. A daily grape vitamin, a chewable orange aspirin, a munchable orange cold tablet.

On television there is a constant barrage of pills for the stomach, pills to make you sleep, pills to keep you awake.

It's all part of what some experts believe is an unconscious program of conditioning our children to become drug addicts — a neatly packaged visual celluloid pill, administered a couple of times every television hour every day of every year. From toddler years to college age it amounts to some 15,000 television hours — just three little hours a day.

"By the time a child is in junior high school what reason does he have to believe that there should be any harm in taking a pill to make him feel happy when he's down or a pill that will wipe away this world and put him into another?" asks William T. Jones, chief of campus security for the University.

Jones is just one of a growing band of people who are deeply concerned about drugs — not only as a campus problem but as a nationwide issue that can be viewed not from just one angle but from a variety.

The drug scene is one of those unhappy circumstances that everybody tried to believe affected only the other guy (usually a long-haired dirty guy). Parents wanted to believe that their kids couldn't end up in Haight-Ashbury. The drug problem was always somewhere else — never in their state, their town, their home.

During the past few years the country's universities have been building themselves a roaring bad reputation as the places where the nation's young acquired the nasty drug habit. Gutless administrators were to blame, people said. Get rid of those hippie types and the problem solves itself, they said.

Like the proverbial iceberg, however, the real problem lies beneath the surface observations. In drugs the underground operations were in full swing. As drug abuse grew, parents of supposedly "straight" children suddenly found themselves bailing their kids out of jail on drug charges.

While the hippie myth still persists, more and more the so-called establishment is becoming aware that colleges and universities aren't the primary culprits in leading young people down the drug path.

At the beginning of the fall semester President Hollomon had a statement about drugs. It's a problem he said, but it's not just the University of Oklahoma's problem. It is a problem that infests every city, every school. Young people today are starting on drugs in junior high — sometimes earlier. They are bringing this problem with them to their colleges and universities, most times without their parents even being aware that such a habit exists.

Undoubtedly, however, many students try drugs for the first time in college. The pressure is greater there, and if they can con some doctor into prescribing diet pills to pep them up or tranquilizers to calm them down, fine. He's the doctor.

Without doubt the greatest problem, the most widely used illicit product, is marihuana. It has been estimated that 10 to 20 million persons in the United

The Pill • Bennies • Tranquillizer • Kif • Aspirin • Hash • Benzadrine • Weed • Dexedrine • Tea • Diet Pill • Pot • Hallucinogen • Sticks • Mescaline • DMT

States are drug abusers — improperly or illegally using everything from hallucinogenics, stimulants, depressants, heavy narcotics to marihuana. The director of the National Institute of Mental Health estimates from 25 to 40 per cent of all students have at least tried marihuana.

Chief Jones doesn't really care about figures or percentages. "You can't deal in those kinds of numbers," he says. "We have no idea how many people are using marihuana or anything else. Percentages are totally inaccurate. The majority of people abusing drugs do so in a very clandestine atmosphere, and the resulting paranoia and rumors destroy the validity of information coming from the drug abusers.

"Because these products are illegal, their production is not controlled," Jones says, "which should lead a reasonable person to conclude that in the manufacturing process neither sanitary measures nor dosage controls are established, which obviously creates a whole new set of dangers.

"What we have," he says, "is a problem in education, mental health, rehabilitation and research as well as a problem in law enforcement. Even the laws themselves create confusion."

Since the passage of America's drug laws in 1937 almost nothing has been done to modify them or to study their effectiveness. In general the occasional high level conferences on the growing drug problem have produced momentary interest but no sustained effort.

Three of the nation's presidents have called such conferences. Various groups of high ranking officials met in 1962, 1963, 1966 and 1969 to discuss the growing drug issue. As a result a few more people are interested in the problem, a little more research is being done, some legislation has been introduced, but by and large the results have been minimal. The problem is growing faster than the answers.

Early in December Oklahoma's governor, Dewey F. Bartlett, began a drug education program for Oklahoma. In a two-day meeting in Oklahoma City some 800 participants heard from a variety of people ranging from a former addict to scholarly writers. The audience included housewives and doctors, law enforcement people and teachers, government officials and a few students.

Out of this conference came an advisory council to the state's attorney general. It is a broadly based group including representation from education, mental and public health, medicine, pharmacology, sociology,

law enforcement and other areas related to the total drug issue. Their task is to identify the problem and attack it from all angles.

At the University level the drug situation has not gone unnoticed. Last fall a series of seminars was initiated. Administered by Harold Andrews, assistant to the vice president for the University community, the program consists of twice weekly discussion sessions in housing units. Panelists representing the fields of sociology, psychology, medicine, pharmacy and law enforcement have an informal discussion, which always includes a question-and-answer period.

"Almost all the panelists could be considered authorities in their fields," Andrews says, "but they don't come over as such during the discussions. The discussions are kept very informal, with panelists giving a non-authoritarian, non-moralizing presentation. It's more credible that way, and the students in the audience aren't turned off before the discussion starts."

Providing effective education on drugs is not an easy task. Kids aren't conned. They know quite a bit about marihuana and its effects. If they haven't used it, they at least know someone who has. They watch a lot of television, see a lot of movies, read a lot of books. They're tough to impress and some amateur job, a condescending approach, a trite though true attack, won't make it with them.

At the University a number of films were previewed by faculty and staff members and students. Most were rejected. The University ended up buying two films out of the many that are available. One is a CBS documentary shown on television earlier this year and the other is a movie "LSD-25" which describes the chemical properties of the drug, the kinds of hallucinations it can cause.

Admittedly, OU's program is geared to a non-using audience. The seminars are designed, as Andrews says, "to make the non-user aware of the ramifications and then to let him make his own decision intelligently as to whether he will try drugs."

The University's position on the matter is simple. If a law is being broken, the University will make every attempt to stop it. At the same time an effort must be made to help students make their own decisions.

Second semester the effort is being expanded significantly. A discussion program using the same people who have worked in the seminar sessions will be started in the Experimental College. Hopefully peo-

a program that doesn't preach

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ple who have had experience with drugs will participate in this and learn. In addition, the various experts in their fields will be available to present programs at all levels on request in the Norman public schools.

A third and somewhat more dramatic effort is being made through the Student Action group. A drug rescue operation is being started which will operate week nights from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. and 24 hours daily on weekends. No medical treatment will be offered, but a student having a bad experience with drugs will be able to call drug rescue and get help — either someone to talk him down from a bad trip or referral to a medical source. Students working in the program are being given first aid training and orientation by a broad range of people working in the drug field.

Though the effort is small and is squeezed out of existing budget money, it has attracted attention. Andrews has received requests from other schools in the process of setting up similar programs.

Such efforts don't hold much hope of bringing a dramatic end to drug traffic. Drugs are available in almost limitless quantities at a price almost anyone can afford. Sometimes they're even available free, on a trial basis.

Law enforcement officials haven't given up on drying up drug sources, however. They have contacts, and they do make arrests. But the underground system is a good one, and it snakes out in every direction. The better the law enforcement in an area, the farther underground the sources go; the harder drugs are to get, the higher the price goes.

The same law of supply and demand that determines how much the grocery charges for eggs or bread applies on the illicit drug market. The upshot is a sort of economic boost to crime in general.

Hard-core drug abusers then become criminals in other ways. "Let's say that a hard narcotics user, a heroin addict, spends \$100 a day on his habit," Chief Jones says. "If he's that heavy a user, he can't hold down any kind of job that will pay much of anything. But he's got to get that \$100. So he steals. If he steals, he has to fence the merchandise to get his money. That means he must steal about \$400 worth of goods to get \$100 in cash. And his habit doesn't take any days off. It's seven days a week, 365 days a year of stealing \$400 a day. For just one heavy user that's a pretty big crime factor. Multiply that times the number of heavy users there must be. If the addict is a woman, her method of raising money is prostitution."

Few people will argue that one joint of marihuana will necessarily lead to the heavy stuff. But each facet of the drug problem by association is undeniably related to the others. Drug use at all levels (except heroin and LSD) is on the rise.

And so it comes back to education. At OU average attendance at the drug seminars is around 35, but as many as 300 have shown up for one session.

"Our program is the only one I've heard of that takes the issue to the students — from house to house — on request," Andrews says.

In addition to the seminars, Andrews has prepared a bibliography on drugs which is available to students. Throughout the program sampling of student opinion has been a guiding factor in its growth.

Their remarks have ranged from "This was a worthwhile discussion" to "We have been absolutely bombarded with this information." Overall remarks have been favorable.

One student said, "I have some very definite ideas on the subject of some 'higher authority' telling me I can't do something which should be my own decision. I thought this part of the discussion was the most interesting."

"I've attended a couple of these panels before, but I liked the idea of hearing different people from different fields. I didn't get bored because of this. Before, it seemed preachy. This panel just gave facts. Much better."

"The sociological aspects discussed included many points that I'd never thought about. Thank you for coming; it was informative."

"I approve that moral issues are avoided in discussion, and that personal opinions are given as well as facts."

The real effectiveness of the seminars, of the high level conferences, of the literature, of the whole drug education premise cannot be measured for some time, but as President Hollomon says, "We're doing everything we know how to do. We're working at the problem."

Alumni who also would like to work on the problem in their own communities may write the National Institute of Mental Health, Box 1080, Washington, D.C. 20013. At OU Harold Andrews will send copies of the drug bibliography to interested persons. He may be reached at the University Community Office, 1506 Asp Ave. 126-B, Norman, Oklahoma 73069.