

Drug Addiction Dips Deeper Into Younger Age Groups

(Continued from Page 1)

to be moving and moving strongly into more remote areas, federal and state officials report.

In the prairie state of Nebraska, for instance, Lt. Wayne Rowe, the state patrol's drug abuse officer, said: "Our experience is that the (drug) problem is increasing and definitely moving downward through the ages. There is far more drug use in junior highs than before. There isn't too much in grade schools yet. But then drugs weren't a big problem even in the high schools until a couple of years ago. Makes you wonder where it will

end."

No one is predicting that. But there are unpleasant portents. In New York's suburban Westchester County, plans are underway to begin drug education in kindergarten on the theory that elementary school may be too late.

"We've probably already lost the battle in the fifth and sixth grades," one suburban drug fighter said.

Last year, those under 16 contributed 17 of their number to the New York City total of 254 teen-agers dead of drug overdoses. This compares to 65 in 1968.

"It would be nice to pass off

the deaths and other New York statistics as just more of the city's urban horror story," said a source at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. "But to some extent these statistics probably can be duplicated now or in the near future on a per capita basis in many parts of the country."

The rapid growth of adolescent addicts and abusers appears to be part of a new wave in the drug culture as well as part of the old.

Officials say they are deeply disturbed by several new trends. Drug taking now is in the open. Teen-agers smoke, swallow and even shoot it up on

school buses, in school rest-rooms and public parks. Instead of being loners and drop-outs, the very young drug takers often are the natural leaders in school, those with the best intelligence and, somewhat surprisingly, those with the best marks. "The freaks in school now are not the ones dropping acid (LSD), or using other drugs," one drug therapist said. "They are the straights, the ones who are clean."

Teachers, out of fear or feelings of impotence, in many cases do nothing. One reported watching a boy "high" on drugs in a Long Island suburban classroom coolly divide up bulk heroin into saleable glassine packets. Corruption among police also has followed drugs into the suburbs and some officers say marijuana use is so prevalent that they hardly enforce the laws unless the violation is especially flagrant or bulk pushers are involved.

Crime rates are soaring in the suburbs as teen-age drug users attempt to pay for their next highs. Schoolgirls have been known to turn to prostitution, boys to muggings and both sexes to burglary and theft.

However, allowances and money lifted from parental billfolds and purses are the most common source of money for drug buys.

Drug fighters, addicts and ex-addicts, users and abusers alike, repeatedly said during interviews that statistics and trends are only a small part of the worsening drug story among the young. "The truth about hell," one ex-addict said, "comes out of a kid who has lived with a spike in his arm or got pills mixed up with popcorn."

From dozens of interviews here are the words of a few who leapt childhood into cynicism and fears worthy of a troubled adult but at the same time are still struggling with the easily bruised and warped emotions of adolescents. Each brings his own insights into the problems or causes of what one top federal drug fighter called an American tragedy.

Leslie, 15, resident in an Odyssey House drug clinic in Manhattan: "I was a snorter (sniffer of heroin) and if I hand't come here to get off drugs I would have gone on till I died. I started on heroin two years ago when I was 13 'cause I wanted to be with my father. He was on junk, too. All of us kids were into heroin and in the beginning it was the happiest

time of my life. You know, when the heroin would hit 15 minutes after a snort. You would just go right out of the world. But it doesn't stay like that too long, you know. The freaks (addicts) warned us about that. It got real ugly later. There were about 15 of us when we started."

Fingering a small golden fish ("I'm a Pisces") on a chain around her neck, Leslie's face twisted a bit as she added: "You know what happened? Of the 15, one is in jail, my boy friend died while he was on the stuff and all the rest but me and four others are sittin' out there sniffin' and shootin' it up heavier and heavier each month."

William, 15, also of Manhattan, thinks he has kicked drugs but is still deeply fearful his escape may be only temporary: "I began at 10 on marijuana, then switched to glue. And then I was snortin' it (heroin,) and as much as I hated the sight of my own blood, I was mainlinin' by 13. That's the trouble with drugs. You just keep going up on them till you get to mainlinin' 'cause you can't get that real high on anything else you can afford."

"Me, I had five busts and then a friend died. But none of it meant anything to us. When we went to the funeral, we were all freaked out (on heroin)."

Gerald, 14, son of a doctor and an experimenter with nearly all drugs except heroin. Home, an affluent suburb outside New York: "The old man thinks I'm just using pot, and that drives him nuts enough. He should know I'm on other stuff too, but he just doesn't want to look at the possibility even when I'm so stoned I can hardly walk."

"But then who the hell is he to talk? I hear him and his friends talking about using pot, too, like it's some big deal. And what kind of example is he?"

MORE
When he comes home, before he even says anything to anybody, he goes into the kitchen and mixes a huge martini. And if alcohol isn't a drug, what is? So after three of those things we maybe get to dinner and lots of times you can hardly understand him... Why can't he be honest with himself? Look at his crappy life. It isn't so damn good."

Parents, school, a feeling of youthful impotence in an adult world they disagree with—these and scores of other reasons are given by the youngsters them-

selves for freaking out on society. But why with drugs and especially why at earlier and earlier ages?

Dr. John C. Kramer, who worked with addicts in California before joining the President's drug task force, says: "If we knew the answers to those questions, we would be a lot closer to a solution." At all levels the answer is pretty much the same, the nearly identical feelings that as yet there is no known treatment or cure for a part emotional, part physical disease ravaging today's young.

Dr. Kramer says he is not as pessimistic about the future as several experts who feel, in the words of one, "We may be losing most of a generation just as surely as France did in World War I. And heroin is our Verdun."

"I think that analogy right now may be just a bit overblown," Dr. Kramer says, adding he is hopeful some way can be found to stem the flood of the young into the world of drugs. "I believe something can be done, but what..." he adds a bit vacantly.

One of the chief problems, many drug fighters including Dr. Kramer say, is that there are no national statistics on drug use and addiction among adolescents or anyone else. No one knows for example, how many heroin addicts there are. The estimate runs from 350,000 to a half million.

But there are statistics for New York City, drug capital not only of America but the world. Roughly half of the nation's heroin addicts are believed to live in the city and its suburbs and perhaps another quarter million in the same area are addicted to, using or abusing other drugs. New York also frequently has set the style and pace of drug use for the nation. Today's trends here are spotted in Iowa and Arkansas a year later.

The drug epidemic spread heavily to the city's teen-agers in the late 1960s. By last year the 254 who were buried included Walter Vandemeer, who died one week after his 12th birthday party.

Dr. Michael Baden, the city's deputy chief medical examiner and a nationally recognized drug authority, says a rule of thumb formula equates one overdose death to 100 addicts. Other sources say perhaps another 300 use the drug but are not yet addicted. Just behind drug overdose as the largest killer of teen-agers other than

natural causes comes homicide, often a drug related crime. Accidents run third followed by suicide, also a fixture in the drug world.

Some 7 per cent of the city's school children have used hypodermics to shoot drugs into their system before graduation or dropping out, a New York City public school survey showed.

Dr. Baden says as many as three generations of heroin addicts live under one roof in many New York buildings, adding, "The surest way to make a heroin addict is to give a child to an addicted mother."

Most teen-agers, especially the younger ones, normally are not physically addicted and treatment centers say withdrawal symptoms in new patients are extremely rare. However, many of those in the drug world, again especially the young, are psychologically wedded to the drug more strongly than in the past.

Alicia, 14, was not reckoned to be physically addicted to heroin by doctors. Yet she said of heroin: "I found out one day I was using it because I had to, not because I wanted to. It's scary when you know you can't stop. Some mornings before I even washed or combed my hair I would throw on my sis' robe and go out in the streets to buy a fix to get up for the day. It was terrifying."

A far smaller percentage of the young seek help compared to those who are older and on the same drugs. A doctor at an Odyssey House treatment center said, "Kids don't come here because they want to get out of drugs. They want out of trouble with their parents or more often with the authorities. Half split (leave) before three weeks of being dry are up."

Psychiatrists say peer group pressure to join the drug world is becoming overwhelming in many areas, including the suburbs.

In one of New York's better suburbs, the 11-year-old daughter of a prominent citizen shocked both parents and drug counsellors by claiming she had been mainlining heroin for the past six months. After much questioning she later denied it and said it was all an elaborate show to win the approval of older friends who were into drugs including cocaine. The girl said she had taken a hypodermic from her diabetic mother and concocted "heroin" from flour to establish her right of entry into the group.

The girl was put into a drug

treatment program where she now lives because, as one doctor said, "If she wasn't using the drug then, she had her mind turned in a direction that almost guaranteed she would have been on something in a month if she had been left on the outside."

Whatever the causes of drug abuse, present cure rates reported by private and public institutions run about 4 to 14 per cent. Experts say dealing with the very young may produce an even lower cure rate.

Many of those on the front lines of the fight against drug lines of the fight against drug federal and state efforts to finance their work.

Frank Garcia, head of SERA, one of New York's many drug clinics, says: "We are funded for failure. The government funds us as an institution, and we are successful at that. But rehabilitation means a lot more than holding someone for a given time in a drug free atmosphere and then turning him back into society. Rehabilitation means a return to former dignity with the skills to compete with the rest of them out there. There is no money for vocational rehabilitation. We can get money only to institutionalize."

Dr. Kramer and many other experts in the field feel only the barest beginning has been reached in the fight against drugs. Nearly a year after President Nixon declared a nationwide war on drugs, most of the emphasis still is on jails rather than rehabilitation.

In the meantime the statistics reflect earlier and earlier use of drugs. An ex-addict working with one New York clinic said: "When I started drugs, we were about 18, 19 or 20. Then it dropped to 17 and 16-year-olds. Now we see kids all the way down to 12. We had one 12-year-old in here who had 48 busts, nearly all for drugs."

"It seems the age drops one year every three or four years. Where will it stop? God knows."

Benefit Dance Set For Camacho

A special benefit dance to raise funds for Julian Camacho, Democrat candidate for Congress, will be held Friday, April 21, at 8:30 p.m. in the Pogonip Club.

Tickets are \$3 and music will be furnished by Buttermilk Sky. The club is located at the end of Clubhouse Drive off River Street.

A Dry Winter Brings Hazards To Southwest

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A winter drought is drying the air and ground in the Southwest, browning crops and rangelands and posing serious fire threats to forests and brush land.

Since a heavy rain in late December, only a barely measurable amount of rain has fallen on Southern California and Nevada and none in Arizona during the normal winter rainy season.

Only .13 inches of rain was recorded in Los Angeles in February and none in January or March. "By this time of year we should have had nine inches," said Joseph Vederman, the Weather Service's chief meteorologist for Southern California. "I think the average person would say we're in a drought."

Winter storms that normally hit Southern California have been diverted into Northern California, Oregon and Washington, he said.

In the high mountains, where thick snowpacks are needed to replenish the rivers and reservoirs in the spring, snowfall is below normal. Some irrigation districts have already cut back water deliveries.

Paul Lane of the aqueduct division of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power said he did not anticipate any water shortages this year. "But if we have another dry year we may experience problems," he said.

In Arizona, Gov. Jack Williams warned, "Arizona may be in for a severe drought again this year and authorities on all levels should be laying plans for such conditions."

brushland has suffered from the dryness but it is not yet a drought. He said if rain does not come soon farmers will have to supply other feed to cattle and sheep, driving up the cost of meat.

"It all adds up to a total crop failure for our dry land grain," said Bob Howie, agriculture commissioner of California's Riverside County. "Possibly 20 per cent of the barley, wheat and oats was saved through irrigation, but all the money was spent on water."

Howie said the irrigation had substantially drained the county's water reserves. Grain crops and pasture grass also were reported destroyed in San Benito, Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties in California.

"If there's a lack of feed grains and we have to import from other states, it could lead to an increase in the cost of meat all up the line," said Simon Nathenson, a spokesman for the California Department of Agriculture in Sacramento.

Nathenson said "It's a little early to estimate the dollar loss" or to gauge the extent of the drought's impact.

In California's Central Valley, the driest March since record keeping began in 1888 was made worse by a two-day freeze late in the month, severely damaging raisin grapes, plums, peaches, nectarines, walnuts and almonds. Wine grapes in the Napa Valley north of San Francisco also were hard hit by the freeze.

Farmers fear cutbacks in summer irrigation because of anticipated lower runoff from the spring snowmelt.

strict canceled April deliveries for the first time in eight years to conserve water for the normally dry summer months.

The U.S. Forest Service imposed early restrictions on campfires and smoking on half of its land in Arizona. A hundred fire fighters and 25 supporting tankers were sent from California to aid in fire prevention and suppression.

Banky Curtis, a wildlife biologist with the California Game and Fish Commission, said, "It's having a severe effect on wild game. I have no doubt that some animals are dying, but the most severe effect is on population growth."

Desert quail and chukar depend on green food for egg production and the chicks must have fresh water soon after hatching, he said. Deer and desert bighorn sheep populations also are expected to drop because of low water levels, and trout production is down because of shallow water, Curtis said.

George Taylor, battalion chief with the Los Angeles County Fire Department, said, "There's little moisture left in the vegetation and grass. The fire danger is going to come sooner this year and last longer. The fire season usually doesn't start until July, but we're already starting to experience small fires."

Dean Seaman, Coconino Forest supervisor at Flagstaff in northern Arizona, said about 50 man-caused fires had been reported so far this year, compared to 10 in the same period in 1971. In all, about 100 forest