

EDUCATION

Low Literacy Tool Shows How Drugs Affect the Brain



A AAAS workshop demonstrates hands-on activities that show how the brain works.

When treating drug abuse, health care providers often recommend literature so that people can learn about the effects of drugs. Research shows that people who understand how drugs affect the mind and body can use this knowledge to help avoid drug abuse or deal with an addiction. But if a person has trouble reading—what then?

AAAS has released *How Drugs Affect the Brain*, a tool kit that provides easy-to-read information about how the brain works and the biological basis for drug addiction. The tool kit is targeted toward adult basic education classes, family literacy classes, GED classes, one-on-one tutoring, and drug education prevention programs. The kit was introduced at a AAAS workshop on 28 August at its headquarters in Washington, D.C., and is being disseminated nationally to literacy providers and drug education programs.

"People are ashamed to tell others they don't read well," said Shirley Malcom, director of AAAS's Directorate for Education and Human Resources Programs. "We want to help them get over that. We want to bridge the gap between people and science and technology."

The tool kit was created as part of the AAAS Science + Literacy for Health: Drug Education Partnership project, funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. It is the last in a series of materials that brings scientific health information to adults at low literacy levels, including *The Brain Book*, *Brain and Behavior*, and *Your Genes*,

Your Choices: How Genetic Research Affects You. Future projects include posting *How Drugs Affect the Brain* on the Web and a new publication about brain development and early childhood.

"*How Drugs Affect the Brain* is a wonderful resource. The subject matter is very timely," said Marcia Harrington, director of the Literacy Resources Division at the D.C. Public Library. "A lot of literacy programs do work with people who have substance abuse problems."

The workshop, sponsored by Science + Literacy for Health and the Science Linkages in the Community Institute, included an overview of the materials, hands-on activities, and a brain-storming session for people to use the materials in their own programs. Those who attended included people

who work in literacy and drug education programs in libraries, hospitals, and homeless shelters.

"The activities certainly hooked people," Harrington said. "The workshop showed people what models they can use with students. And it showed them that they don't need sophisticated equipment—they may need only to make photocopies." In one activity, participants formed two lines, with the "brain" in the middle, and passed along the words "stubbed toe" and "pain" to demonstrate how information is transmitted through the nervous system. In another, participants dribbled basketballs to show how a slow, regular rhythm for the heart is easier to maintain than a faster one.

The tool kit is divided in four sections: "How the Brain Works," "How Drugs Affect the Brain," "How Drugs Affect the Fetal Brain," and "How Scientists Learn about the Brain." It includes comprehension exercises, hands-on activities, GED practice exercises, and a list of additional resources.

For more information on how to receive the kit, contact Chickona Royster at 202-326-6454 or croyster@aaas.org.

LARRY JACKSON

MEETINGS

Calendar of Events

Below is a partial listing of the events sponsored by AAAS. For more information, see the contact names listed below.

1–2 October *Dialogue on Global Climate Change* to explore science, values, economics, and public policy. Sponsored by the AAAS Program of Dialogue Between Science and Religion, AAAS Headquarters, Washington, D.C. Registration is free; contact Matt Zimmerman at 202-326-6733, or register online at www.aaas.org/spp/dspp/dbsr.

5–7 October *Asia-Pacific High-Level Conference on Sustainable Agriculture*. Sponsored by the AAAS Directorate of International Programs, Beijing, China. Contact Suteera Nagavajara at 202-326-6650, fax 202-289-4958, or snagavaj@aaas.org.

9 October *Preschool Science Workshop*. Sponsored by AAAS and the Science Linkages in the Community Institute, AAAS Headquarters, Washington, D.C. Contact Steven Grant or Patricia Thompson at 202-326-6681, 800-351-7542, or www.aaas.org/ehr/slic.

15–16 October *U.S.-German Colloquium, Issues of Future International Collaboration in Science and Technology: Driving Forces, Trends, and Attitudes*. Sponsored by the AAAS Directorate for International Programs and the German-American Academic Council, AAAS Headquarters, Washington, D.C. Contact Linda Stroud at 202-326-6659 or lstroud@aaas.org.

8–9 November *Reducing Errors in Health Care*. Sponsored by the AAAS Directorate for Science and Policy Programs, the Annenberg Center for Health Sciences, the National Patient Safety Foundation, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Rancho Mirage, California. Contact the AAAS Science and Policy Programs Directorate at 202-326-6600.

21–26 January *1999 AAAS Annual Meeting*. Anaheim Hilton and Marriott Hotels, Anaheim, California. Contact the Meetings Office at 202-326-6450.

GOVERNANCE

Annual Elections

Ballots for the 1998 election of the AAAS president-elect, members of the Board of Directors and the Committee on Nominations, and section officers were mailed to all active AAAS members (as of the 31 July 1998 issue of *Science*). Please return the ballot by 13 November. Ballots postmarked after that date will not be counted. If you do not receive a ballot by mid-October, contact Linda McDaniel at Lmcdanie@aaas.org or by fax at 202-371-9526.

Association members can nominate candidates (including themselves) for president-elect and the Board of Directors for election in the fall of 1999 for terms beginning in February 2000. For a list of this year's candidates, see "AAAS News and Notes" in the 26 June issue of *Science*; for a list of current Board members, see the contents page of any recent issue of *Science*. Please send nominee's curriculum vitae no later than 30 October to Gretchen Seiler, AAAS Executive Office, 1200 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20005. Nominations will be considered by the AAAS Committee on Nominations at its fall 1998 meeting.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Report Cites Rights Violations in Turkey

Turkey must work to improve its human rights record and its treatment of scientists, said a report released by the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program this month.

The report noted that the Turkish government has attacked the confidentiality of medical records from torture treatment centers operated by the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, and that medical professionals have disappeared, been arbitrarily detained, and prosecuted for treating or supporting members of the the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK).

The report was based on six AAAS missions to Turkey from 1995 to 1997 to study the human rights of scientists in Turkey. The missions were conducted in conjunction with efforts to support the work of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey on behalf of survivors of torture, and to document human rights abuses which affect the scientific community in Turkey. The report is being

distributed to the U.S. and Turkish governments, human rights organizations, and scientific organizations.

AAAS and the international community have been tracking human rights violations in Turkey, which has seen a 14-year conflict between the government and the separatist PKK in the southeast of the country. The military campaign against the PKK has led to the evacuation of more than 3000 villages since 1990.

"The war in the south has had a chilling affect on human rights," said Elisa Muñoz of AAAS. "Despite that, people are still speaking out."

The report said that Turkey's failure to improve its human rights record, despite the introduction of positive amendments to Turkey's legislation and the Constitution, calls into question the ability of the country's political leaders to institute reforms that would improve human rights conditions and enable democratic institutions to function effectively.

"The political landscape and history in Turkey make it impossible for human rights to improve unless there are fundamental changes in the political structure and a real commitment to implement those changes," Muñoz said.

According to the report, social scientists who engage in work dealing with Kurdish issues are particularly vulnerable to human rights violations. "The Turkish government has charged, prosecuted, and imprisoned scientists for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association, and monitoring human rights violations," the report said.

Also, the Turkish government has interfered with medical confidentiality and professional ethics, making it impossible for physicians to maintain the international standards of their profession without risk, the report said. Physicians have been prosecuted for treating alleged guerrillas, as well as refusing to hand over patient files to government officials.

The report includes four case studies concerning representatives of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey—a physician, a political scientist, and a sociologist—some who have been imprisoned for their



In Istanbul, mothers protest the disappearance of their children.

work with Kurdish issues or treatment of torture survivors.

The report said that in addition to political changes, the improvement of Turkey's human rights record depends on the Turkish government's respecting patient-physician confidentiality, supporting efforts to treat torture survivors, and implementing safeguards against torture.

For more information about the report, contact Elisa Muñoz at 202-326-6797 or emunoz@aaas.org.

MEETINGS

Call for Resolutions

The next meeting of the AAAS Council will take place on 24 January from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Hilton Pacific Ballroom during the AAAS Annual Meeting in Anaheim, California.

Individuals or organizations wishing to present proposals or resolutions for possible consideration by the Council should submit them in written form to Richard Nicholson, AAAS Executive Officer, by 30 October 1998.

Items should be consistent with AAAS's objectives and be appropriate for consideration by the Council. Resolutions should be in the traditional format, beginning with "whereas" statements and ending with "therefore be it resolved."

The Committee on Council Affairs will hold its open hearing on submitted items from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. on 23 January. Late proposals or resolutions delivered to the AAAS Executive Officer in advance of the 23 January meeting will be considered, provided they are accompanied by a written explanation of why they were not submitted by the October deadline.

Summaries of the Council meeting agenda will be available during the Annual Meeting at the AAAS information booth. A copy of the full agenda will be available for inspection at the Annual Meeting headquarters office.