

The participant in the methadone "maintenance" programs receives a daily dose of the drug for an indefinite period, and the operative assumption is that, should the methadone treatment be interrupted, the person will start using heroin again. Methadone, therefore, offers rehabilitation without a "cure."

Federal resistance to modification of the restrictions on methadone use doubtless is based in part on the traditional resistance of federal narcotics law enforcers to addiction "maintenance" programs. But the prospect of large-scale methadone programs does raise some fairly difficult control problems.

Methadone is now legally approved and used fairly widely for two purposes: (i) as a pain-killing analgesic and (ii) as perhaps the most satisfactory agent in detoxifying or "withdrawing" heroin addicts. The drug is readily obtainable by physicians who use it for the approved purposes and who comply with the provisions of the narcotics laws. The current problem arises because use of methadone in long-term treatment programs legally constitutes a "new use" for the drug, and this requires that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) consider it for safety and efficacy before it is approved for broad use.

Because methadone is a narcotic, the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD) in the Department of Justice is also involved in setting the terms under which methadone is to be used in addict-treatment programs. For some time, work on new regulations has been carried on by officials of FDA and BNDD and of their parent agencies, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) and the Department of Justice. Also involved is the National Institute of Mental Health, which has been designated to take the lead in federal research on narcotics addiction and rehabilitation.

In mid-April, HEW assistant secretary for health and scientific affairs Roger O. Egeberg told a Senate subcommittee that regulations easing the restrictions on methadone would be issued in a few weeks. In reporting Egeberg's remarks, however, newsmen quoted Egeberg in a way that overstated his own and his department's position. The lead of the wire service story carried by *The New York Times* and other papers said, "The Nixon Administration indicated today that it would soon let doctors switch heroin addicts to regular doses of methadone,

a cheap and relatively harmless heroin substitute," and then went on to quote Egeberg as saying "it will be seen that a doctor who is interested in carrying his patient on methadone can get such permission rather easily."

The quote was accurate enough, but by failing to place it in broader context

the report perpetuated some fairly common oversimplifications about methadone. Faced with the literally hopeless situation of so many heroin addicts, some partisans of methadone treatment endow methadone with almost magical properties and journalists have tended to follow their lead.

NAS Again Says No to Shockley

For more than 4 years now, William Shockley, a Stanford physicist who shared a Nobel Prize for his part in inventing the transistor, has been carrying on a dogged campaign to have the National Academy of Sciences encourage research in "dysgenics." As he defines it, dysgenics has to do with the "retrogressive evolution" of a population through the reproduction, in disproportionately large numbers, of its genetically inferior elements. Specifically, Shockley is afraid that the U.S. population is declining in quality through the reproduction of large numbers of Negroes of low I.Q., a view which he says can in no sense be ascribed to a "rascist" motivation. Last week, the academy rebuffed Shockley's latest attempt to have it go on record as favoring dysgenics research. His proposed resolution to that effect was not seconded. He found some satisfaction, however, in the as yet unreleased report of an academy committee.

This committee was appointed by Philip Handler, president of the academy, after an academy meeting last October at which Shockley had again raised the dysgenics research issue. Kingsley Davis, a sociologist at Berkeley, was named chairman. According to Shockley, the report of the Davis committee, which the academy received but took no action on, acknowledges that study of racial and hereditary differences is "proper and socially relevant."

Difference in Viewpoints "Enormous"

"The report indicates that members of the committee 'variously' regarded the impact of suppressive attitudes on research in this area," Shockley told *Science*. "The difference in viewpoints on research taboos about human quality problems are enormous in my opinion. I think the word 'variously' does not portray this."

Shockley added, however, that "my general reaction is that this report represents enormous progress over the one issued in 1967." Here Shockley was alluding to a 1967 report of the academy which concluded in part by questioning "the social urgency of a crash program to measure genetic differences in intellectual and emotional traits between racial groups." "In the first place, if the traits are at all complex [as the report had said they would surely be], the results of such research are almost certain to be inconclusive," this report said. "In the second place, it is not clear that major social decisions depend on such information; we would hope that persons would be considered as individuals and not as members of groups."

Shockley is himself doing some dysgenics research by surveying available data. At the academy meeting last week, Joel C. Hildebrand, professor of chemistry emeritus at Berkeley, moved that the academy declare it out of order for anyone to seek academy sponsorship for one of his own research projects. His motion was tabled, however. Hildebrand, who last fall offered the motion leading to the appointment of the Davis committee, dismisses the report of that committee as "worthless for the purpose of making clear to the public that Shockley's proposals are essentially unscientific and antisocial." The report is now under review by the academy.—L.J.C.