

MEDICINE

No Basis for Addiction In Study With Miltown

► DOSES of the tranquilizer Miltown strong enough to be effective will not cause addiction.

In a study conducted by a team of New York Medical College researchers 60 elderly hospital patients were given a capsule containing 400 milligrams of Miltown three times a day. The patients were continued on the tranquilizer for eight weeks.

After this period, the researchers report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Dec. 6), the 30 men and 30 women were given a "sugar pill," a placebo, for two more weeks. A control group of 15 men and 15 women received the placebo for the entire 10-week period.

There was no evidence that the patients had become either physically or mentally addicted to the drug, even though withdrawal was sudden.

The drug, one of the meprobamates, acts as a central nervous system depressant, causing some increase in daytime dozing. Some 64% of the patients, none of whom needed the tranquilizer as medication, receiving the Miltown said they slept better at night, while only 28% of those receiving the placebo reported this.

There was evidence that the dose was large enough to be effective inasmuch as five patients had falls as a result of the central nervous system effects of the drug, the researchers said.

Since the sense of well-being caused by drugs like Miltown may lead to their use far beyond the period needed for relief, it is significant that ordinary clinical doses do not cause addiction, the researchers indicate. Withdrawal symptoms are, however, associated with large doses of meprobamates.

The personality of the patient, his previous drug history and the size of the dose are important deciding factors in the development of addiction.

Drs. Linn J. Boyd, Leonard Cammer, Michael J. Mulinos and Victor F. Huppert, and Harvey Hammer, from the departments of medicine, psychiatry, and physiology and pharmacology at the New York Medical College, reported the study of the long-term administration of meprobamate.

Science News Letter, December 20, 1958

Questions

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