



IN REPLYING
ADDRESS THE SURGEON GENERAL,
U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
AND REFER TO

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

WASHINGTON

September 30, 1935.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL
Medical Officer in Charge,
United States Narcotic Farm,
Lexington, Kentucky.



Sir:

I am enclosing herewith the complete file, consisting of special reports rendered by Dr. Himmelsbach on studies of dihydrodesoxymorphine-D, being part of a co-operative study with the Committee on Drug Addiction of the National Research Council. The matter is being referred to you in order that you may have first-hand information as to the situation to be described below.

When the Chemistry Unit at the University of Virginia had discovered dihydrodesoxymorphine-D and referred the matter for biological studies to the unit at Ann Arbor, Michigan, certain statements in published articles made by the latter, including press statements, and a statement made by Mr. Anslinger before the Drug Manufacturers' Association and before the League of Nations, gave an impetus to the value of dihydrodesoxymorphine-D which seemed unwarranted from the facts then available. Dr. Eddy at Ann Arbor was much inclined to believe that the substance had no addiction liability because he was unable to demonstrate addiction in monkeys, and after the preliminary study was made at Leavenworth in relation to its satisfying addiction, he was much upset, and insisted that the situation of withdrawal symptoms was not an index of addiction liability, but that material should be used which heretofore had never developed a tolerance to the phenanthrene series.

At great trouble and expense the Service undertook special studies in connection with cancer in Massachusetts, the details of which can be explained by Dr. Himmelsbach.

Dr. Eddy, in cooperation with Dr. Seiver in Michigan, has undertaken intensive observation of the administration of this substance to monkeys, and it is understood that they

have prepared a recent article wherein it is claimed that dihydrodesoxymorphine-D is not addicting, at least to the primates.

The attitude of Dr. Edmunds, who is Professor of Pharmacology at Ann Arbor, and Dr. Eddy, has tended to belittle the observations made by Dr. Himmelsbach on the human reaction, which, after all, is our problem, rather than the interpretation of addiction liability of substances as seen in lower animals. There is a suggestion that Eddy's attitude is one to belittle the observations of the Service, and the relationships have not been pleasing.

In anticipation of a meeting of the Drug Committee to be held in Washington some time the latter part of November, it seems desirable to review not only the work of Dr. Small and Dr. Eddy, but also the work of Dr. Himmelsbach, in relation to his determining the addiction liability of the new substances that have been referred to the Public Health Service for that purpose, the Drug Committee having requested the Service to undertake that phase of the work. Other investigative studies that are under way or contemplated need not enter into the matter at all.

In order to iron out the situation outlined above, I have agreed with Dr. White, who is Chairman of the Committee, that the two of us, accompanied by Dr. Eddy and Dr. Small, will visit Lexington on October 15th, 16th and possibly the 17th, for the purpose of ironing out these differences, and in anticipation of that meeting I would like to have Dr. Himmelsbach prepare a report combining the observations made at the Penitentiary Annex and those made in Massachusetts on the addiction liability of dihydrodesoxymorphine-D as seen in the human being. It is very probable that these differences could be ironed out by this conference, and that a combined report could be submitted to the annual meeting of the Drug Committee late in November.

The file which I am enclosing is the property of the Bureau and it should all be returned intact when it has served the above purpose.

It is probable that you may want to be the hospitable host for this group when they visit Lexington, but I think that would be an imposition upon you personally, and since the Drug Committee will pay their expenses I think it no more than right and proper that they go to the hotel in Lexington. We shall

plan to leave here the night of the 14th and arrive on the early morning train the 15th. If there are any further inquiries concerning this proposed meeting, will you please write me in order that I can amplify the above statement.

With kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,



Assistant Surgeon General,
Division of Mental Hygiene.

WLF:JT

Enclosure.

P. S. I may add that the Public Health Service is of the opinion that dihydrodesoxymorphine-D is a very dangerous substance, and intends to recommend to the Secretary of the Treasury that no firm be licensed in the United States for the manufacture, sale or distribution of the drug. The Government's attitude with reference to this matter naturally puts quite a crimp in the Ann Arbor group, and I think they are much piqued by their premature endorsement of the substance, which has been transferred to criticism and condemnation of the Service observations. ^{As projected as}