



Update

A NEWSLETTER FOR PROFESSIONALS

Studies on Narcotics Anonymous in the United Kingdom

Four research articles came across our desk this summer describing recent studies in Great Britain of that country's Narcotics Anonymous movement.

"Narcotics Anonymous in Britain" by Brian Wells appeared in *Heroin Addiction and Drug Policy: the British System*, edited by John Strang and Michael Gossop, published in New York by the Oxford University Press (1994). This eight-page article provides a thorough overview of NA in the UK. "NA started in Britain in 1979," Dr. Wells writes in his conclusion. "It grew rapidly throughout the 1980's, and continues to grow as it develops a good reputation and relationships with professional staff. Whilst there are some problems, it remains an important, freely available adjunct to therapy and after-care for persons and their families suffering drug-related problems. Any such clients may usefully be encouraged to attend. Professionals are invited to attend open meetings themselves, many of whom enjoy doing so, often acquiring a list of useful contacts in the process."

"Anxiety and Self-Esteem as a Function of Abstinence Time Among Recovering Addicts Attending Narcotics Anonymous" by George Christo and Stephen Sutton appeared in the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* (1994), 33:198-200. The abstract reads, "Among 200 members of Narcotics Anonymous, those who had been off drugs and in contact with NA for longer tended to have lower trait anxiety and higher self-esteem scores, the relationship in each case being approximately linear. Those abstinent for longer than about three years had levels of anxiety and self-esteem similar to those in a comparison group of 60 students."

"Does Recovery Happen in NA, and How Long Does It Take?" by George Christo appeared in the *ISDD Druglink* for July-August 1994. This is another take on the same study reported above. Mr. Christo measured levels of anxiety and self-esteem among 200 NA members with varying lengths of "clean time" and compared them to 60 "normal" students. There appeared to be a two-year delay before consistent psychological improvement. After four years of recovery, the addicts' scores approached those of the control group.

"Drug Users' Spiritual Beliefs, Locus of Control, and the Disease Concept in Relation to Narcotics Anonymous Attendance and Six-Month Outcomes" by George Christo and Christine Franey appeared in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* (1995), 38:51-56. The abstract reads, "Narcotics Anonymous is an important support network for drug users emerging from abstinence-based treatments. However, the views of NA on 'spirituality' and the 'disease' nature of addiction could be seen as encouraging an external attributional style and have been cited as reasons for non-attendance. After 6 months ninety percent of 101 drug users in treatment were followed up. Narcotics Anonymous attendance was inversely related to drug use for those who had left residential care. We found that spiritual beliefs and disease-concept beliefs were not prerequisites for attendance of NA. Spiritual beliefs were not found to cause external attributions for previous drug use or possible future lapse events. It emerged that the most powerful predictors of non-attendance were positive attitudes to the use of alcohol. Treatment implications are discussed."

Please send us copies or source information on published as well as "fugitive" or "grey" research articles about Narcotics Anonymous. We hope to periodically publish abstracts of the material we receive to make it easier for you to study our organization.