

Clinic records fair game

On 21 May, a squad of police officers entered the private Fairways Clinic in London and arrested Dr Adrian Garfoot and two of his colleagues on the charge of conspiracy to supply drugs. The police confiscated all the clinic's records and computer files – without a warrant – under Section 32 of the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act. Although the drug workers were released on bail, the use of PACE to obtain evidence from patient records is an extremely worrying precedent.

Normally, a high court judge needs to authorise an examination of a patient's medical records. But Section 32 of PACE allows police the power to search any premises which may connect an arrestee to a crime, in this case the conspiracy to supply drugs. However, a source at the clinic felt that the charge was "just a way to gain entry. After all, it's rather like going into a wet fish shop and charging someone with conspiracy to supply cod and chips."

By resorting to Section 32 of PACE, the police may have signalled that any prescribing drug agency or needle exchange could be vulnerable to similar attacks. Alan MacFarlane of the Home Office Drugs Branch, disputes this, arguing instead that this was a unique situation. Without a warrant, he said, "the police need sufficiently good reasons to march into practice premises and arrest the doctor on the spot. If this was to be the future of police drug action, yes I would be worried. But we all know that isn't the case."

The officer in charge of the investigation, Detective Inspector John Shatford, told *Druglink* that "we were not fishing. We didn't need a special procedure warrant because the charge related specifically to the medical records." In other words, the charge of conspiracy to supply drugs requires the police to examine clinical files. Any other charge, such as handling stolen goods, would not carry this requirement.

Confidential files

Aside from this issue, police raids upset clients and the confiscation of clinic records will make them fear for an agency's confidentiality. At the time of writing, although the police have returned most of the records confiscated, over a hundred computer disks are still missing. Mike Goodman, director of Release, told *Druglink*, "we are extremely concerned about the implications of confidential client files being seized by the police and used in criminal actions."

Once again, this case highlights the vulnerability of doctors and the stresses placed upon them. The police had been under pressure from local residents to "do something" about the number of drug users in the area, and it seems that the impetus for the police raid may have come from an angry client making a serious allegation against the clinic. In the words of Alan MacFarlane, "any doctor who treats drug addicts is working with a bunch of problematic people, amongst whom are some who have become extremely manipulative. Doctors are definitely vulnerable, and drug addicts are more likely to be in conflict with their doctor than other patients".

But if it is based on the word of a disgruntled client (or maybe even an arrested client doing a spot of plea-bargaining), in the words of a source at the clinic, "the police have gone an awful long way down the road of believing it."

Oswin Baker

Timothy Leary 1920-1996

Timothy Leary, whose slogan 'tune in, turn on and drop out' became the mantra of the sixties, died of cancer on May 31st at the age of 75.

There was little indication in his early life that he would become the scourge of the American establishment. Born in Springfield, Massachusetts, he began his career in the scientific community, writing a standard work on psychology and gaining a PhD in 1953. He also invented the Leary Personality Test, which was used amongst others by the CIA as part of its staff recruitment programme. But it was during his time at Harvard University's Centre for Personality Research in the early 1960s that his world was turned upside down.

At 40, with an unsatisfactory personal life behind him, Leary was gripped by a mid-life crisis. On holiday in Mexico he tried some psilocybin mushrooms, describing the effect as "the deepest religious experience of my life".

He began a series of experiments at Harvard with mushrooms and LSD, which led to his dismissal in 1963. From then on he became a renegade scientist. Armed with a keen sense for publicity, he captivated the imagination of young people while outraging their parents by crusading on behalf of psychedelic drugs and the benefits he felt they could bring to humanity. In common with other key radical figures

The HEA gets real

After our report in the last *Druglink* on the Health Education Authority's anti-drug campaign, the HEA has released details of the research it carried out prior to the adverts. When viewed alongside the results of the 1994 British Crime Survey (see over the page) the HEA's research makes for disturbing reading.

Over 5000 11-35 year olds were interviewed in England in 1995. Overall, seven in ten had been offered drugs and nearly nine in ten 20-22 year olds had. Men were more likely than women to be offered drugs, as were people in the social grades ABC1 and E (professional, clerical and those dependent on state benefits). As for use, 45 per cent had ever taken a drug, rising to over 60 per cent for 20-22 year olds. 15 per cent said they had taken drugs in the

last three months, again supporting the British Crime Survey's finding that a third of young people who have ever taken drugs will be recent users.

As ever, cannabis was the most commonly tried drug (37 per cent had taken it some time and seven per cent had taken it in the last week), followed by amphetamine (15 per cent), amyl nitrite (14 per cent), magic mushrooms (10 per cent), LSD (nine per cent) and ecstasy (seven per cent). Over two in five of those who had ever used a drug had used it in combination with other drugs or alcohol.

Youth with attitude

The responses to the questions about drug use are, by now, depressingly familiar. Around half of young people have taken drugs and a substantial minority of them are regular users – about one in seven. However, the study does yield valuable information in its exploration of young people's attitudes and knowledge.

Recent users tended to know more about the risks involved in drug use than non-users and those who had used drugs some time ago. Despite this, overall, half of those questioned knew of no health risks associated with amphetamine or cannabis. The study interprets this as a display of a lack of knowledge, but it could just as easily stem from young people's attitudes to risk and their belief that much drug use is 'harm free'. This could be supported by the fact that nearly three in ten could not think of ways to reduce harm.

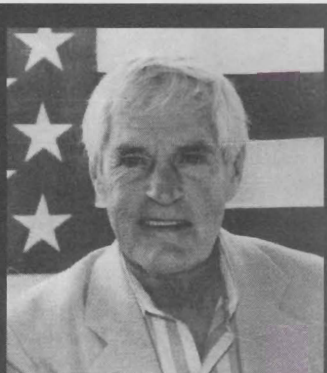
When the drug users were asked about the positive and negative aspects of drugs, they were much more consistent in describing what they liked about the experience than about what they disliked. Nearly a quarter said that it relaxed them and a similar proportion felt that it was good fun.

More answers were given for the negative aspects but with less agreement – 13 per cent found the health risks worrying, seven per cent the cost, seven per cent the illegality and six per cent the 'morning after'. Given such a range, it is hardly surprising that half the users had no plans to give up drugs.

Correction

In the last *Druglink* Factsheet, "New Drugs Update", it was wrongly stated that Solpadol contains dihydrocodeine.

Solpadol only contains codeine and paracetamol.



of the time, he was seen as a danger to the state, and became a target of America's law enforcement agencies. He evaded arrest in 1970, but eventually spent three years in jail for minor possession offences.

Having published his drug manifesto *The Politics of Ecstasy*, in 1970, he turned his attention away from drugs and towards computer technology, dubbing the PC "the LSD of the nineties". He took a keen interest in the possibilities of cyberspace and virtual reality, and planned to commit suicide on the Internet when the cancer pain became too great. He died before he had the chance.

Opinions differ on Leary, and he has been called everything from showman charlatan to psychedelic visionary. But whether it was high times or high-tech, Leary was constantly looking for ways to extend the narrow perceptions of everyday existence. His place in the history of altered states of consciousness is secured. And (to quote his last words) why not?

Harry Shapiro