

## The Schizophrenic Rehabilitee

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### INTRODUCTION

It has been shown (Wing and Giddens 1959, Wing 1960) that schizophrenics may benefit from a course at a Ministry of Labour Industrial Rehabilitation Unit. Psychiatric cases make "special demands on the staff time" (Ministry of Labour Gazette 1962) and if they comprise too high a proportion, may alter the atmosphere of the Unit from "industrial" to "hospital". There follows a need for limitation by selection of such cases. Selection procedures however have not been fully worked out (Wing 1960).

The purpose of this study is the ascertainment of those factors relating to whether schizophrenics taking a course at a Ministry of Labour Industrial Rehabilitation Unit complete the course normally or terminate it prematurely.

*Method.* This was similar to that used in a previous study (Gittleston 1965). Fifty-two consecutive weekly intakes to the Ministry of Labour Industrial Rehabilitation Unit at Handsworth, Sheffield were studied. Diagnosis was based on clinical interview. Completion of the course, as against premature termination, was the criterion of success.

*Results.* The total number of schizophrenic rehabilitees was 35 (7 females and 28 males). The overall premature termination rate was 31 per cent. (11 out of 35). Of the 35 cases, 29 were known on entry to be schizophrenic from their documentation, and 6 (17 per cent.) were so diagnosed for the first time during their I.R.U. course.

*Previous Admission to an Industrial Rehabilitation Unit.* Of the 10 rehabilitees who had undergone a previous course, 3 terminated prematurely. The rate for those on their first course was 8 out of 25. Although these figures are too small for statistical significance, they tend to support the view that the schizophrenic's performance on course is not "improved" by having had a previous course. This confirms the findings of a

previous study of the psychiatric rehabilitee (Gittleston 1965).

*Period of Unemployment.* This was taken to the nearest whole month from the last day the rehabilitee actually worked to the date of the interview. There was no significant difference between the mean times off work of those whose courses were prematurely terminated: 11 cases with a mean of 26.7 months, and those who completed the course: 22 cases with a mean of 26.3 months (2 had never worked).

*Age.* There was no significant difference between the mean age of the 11 cases whose courses were prematurely terminated—32.4 years and the 24 cases who completed the course—31.7 years.

*Duration of Illness.* This was taken as the number of months from the onset of symptoms to the interview date, irrespective of remissions and present state.

The 11 cases whose courses were prematurely terminated had a mean duration of illness of 40.2 months (Range 6—132; Standard Deviation = 38.2). The 24 cases who completed their courses had a mean duration of illness of 97.9 months (Range 5—264; Standard Deviation = 74.0). This difference is highly significant; Critical Ratio = 2.94 Degrees of Freedom = 33:

$$\cdot 01 > P > \cdot 005$$

The mean duration of illness for the entire sample of 35 cases was 79.8 months. Of the 19 cases whose duration of illness was less than the overall mean, 10 (53 per cent.) were prematurely terminated. Of the 16 cases whose duration of illness was greater than the overall mean only 1 (6 per cent.) was prematurely terminated. A Chi-squared test (with Yates's correction) gives 6.65; Degrees of Freedom = 1

$$\cdot 01 > P > \cdot 005$$

In brief, rehabilitees whose schizophrenia was

of less than 80 months duration had nearly 9 times the premature termination rate of those schizophrenics whose illness was of more than 80 months duration.

#### DISCUSSION

This study suggests that those schizophrenics whose illness is of long duration fare better on course than those whose illness is of short duration. The cases of Wing and Giddens (1959) did well at an I.R.U. They had a mean age of 35.3 years and a mean age of onset of 25.3 years. These figures suggest that their cases had a long duration of illness. Early (1963) found that the long-hospitalized, long unemployed paranoid schizophrenic did best at an industrial workshop. He found that younger patients with short unemployment records and less than one year in hospital did worst. The phrases "long hospitalized" and "long unemployed" used by Early, again imply a long duration of illness. The argument that a long duration of illness is merely a reflection of greater age, which is associated with increasing maturity and "steadiness" is negated by the fact that the failure group have a slightly (but not significantly) greater age than the "success" group.

#### SUMMARY

Thirty-five schizophrenic rehabilitees admitted to a Ministry of Labour Industrial

Rehabilitation Unit over a period of 52 consecutive weeks were studied. The criterion of performance on course was premature termination versus normal completion of the course. 17 per cent. (6 out of 35) were diagnosed as schizophrenic for the first time whilst on the course. Those schizophrenics whose illness was of less than 80 months duration failed the course nearly 9 times more frequently than those whose illness was of more than 80 months duration.

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