

Geneva, February 4th, 1932.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC IN OPIUM AND
OTHER DANGEROUS DRUGS.

Detoxication treatment of opium addicts by Vesicular Serum.

(Dr. Modinos' Method)

Extract from
"Berichten uitgaande van de Anti-Opiumvereniging",
No. 7, December 1931.

Note by the Secretary.

The Secretary has the honour to communicate to the members of the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and other Dangerous Drugs, for their further information and in continuance of Documents O.C. 1188, O.C.1188(a) and O.C. 1188(b), the following extract from the above pamphlet issued by the Anti-Opium Association (Anti-Opiumvereniging) of Batavia, Netherlands Indies.

Translation.

The Modinos Treatment.

The "Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant" comments as follows on the researches of Dr. F. J. H. Noordhoek Hegt:

"Encouraged by the results obtained by the Chinese doctors, Dr. Hegt adopted the Modinos method. He also 'weaned' patients in the usual way by gradually reducing the daily allowance of opium, with or without medical treatment for the disagreeable symptoms which usually accompany a reduction in the opium allowance. During the process of 'weaning', the patient's sensitiveness was tested by skin tests and by the administration of larger or smaller doses of morphia, opium tincture, etc. Finally, when the patient was wholly or almost wholly free of opium addiction, he was subjected to the 'smoking' test. If the patient felt sickness from the 'first' rise after the cure, Dr. Hegt considered the smoking test positive; if the patient did not vomit or feel nausea, or was not attacked by fits of coughing, the test was regarded as negative.

"The results obtained by Dr. Hegt may be summarised as follows: All patients treated by the Modinos method recovered, in the sense that when deprived of opium they were free of disagreeable symptoms. But all other patients treated by the ordinary method were cured in the same time. There was no difference between the two groups as regards skin reactions or the general reactions to opium preparations. In the case of patients receiving the vesicant treatment, the smoking test was sometimes negative and sometimes positive, and was of no help in forming a prognosis. Out of 9 patients undergoing the vesicant treatment and reacting positively to the smoking test, i.e. showing distress after the first pipe, 4 had already relapsed after two months. Of 4 patients receiving the vesicant treatment but reacting negatively to the smoking test, one relapsed after two months. Of 14 patients under careful observation, who had been cured by the vesicant treatment, 5 had already relapsed after two months.

"It is certainly remarkable that the smoking test was never positive in the case of patients treated by another method. Does this denote a real difference between other methods and the vesicant method, which often results in definite sickness after the first pipe? Dr. Hegt is inclined to attribute the difference to psychological factors. All Chinese receiving treatment have heard of the vesicant method, and of the aversion to opium caused by that method. By way of control Dr. Hegt injected a little cooking-salt solution into a number of patients instead of the vesicular serum, and even in these cases the smoking test repeatedly proved positive! That explains

why the agitation displayed by so many patients in reacting to the first pipe often gave the impression of being exaggerated.

"Dr. Hegt's experiences are thus not calculated to increase confidence in the Modinos method. The great success of his colleagues, Drs. Kwa and Tan, he attributes to the extreme care taken by them, both during treatment and during the period of convalescence. This care is necessary in order to help patients over difficult moments at bad periods of their ailment. Indeed, Drs. Kwa and Tan themselves write as follows:

"Since opium-smokers are, as a rule, weak-willed, and have no power of resistance, it is not enough to wean them from the opium habit by curative treatment: former smokers who have been weaned by the "sleep" method or the vesicant method must be kept constantly under observation. The observers must strengthen the will of former smokers by training, and must give them any necessary advice. A clinic or polyclinic must also be available, to which former smokers may be sent if they fall ill. There is a constant danger of the abuse of opium or morphine if the usual household remedies are unavailing.

"Thus the last word on the Modinos method has not yet been said. Whatever the final judgment may be, however, this treatment marks a definite advance, if only on account of the analysis of psychological factors."