In: Hallucinogenic drugs and their psychotherapeutic use.
Proc.Quart.Meeting Royal Med.-Psychol.Ass., London, Febr.1961.
Ed.by: R.Crocket, R.A. Sandison, A.Walk. Lewis, London 1963
pp. 112-115.

A CASE OF PSYCHOPATHIC PERSONALITY WITH HOMOSEXUALITY TREATED BY LSD

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THIS was a Jewish man of thirty-two, referred to the Marlborough Day Hospital from the London Jewish Hospital, after he had received every possible form of treatment and had not responded to any.

Complaint. He was complaining of feeling antisocial and completely unable to get on with people whether at work or in private. He was irritable and depressed, he also suffered from a stammer, and from active homosexuality, which he deplored. He was unable to hold a job for more than a week or two, since he developed ideas of reference about the people he worked with.

Present History. When I saw him for the first time in 1955 he was an extremely miserable and desperate man, since he felt he had received all the different types of treatment possible, and he had not responded to any of them, so that he wondered if there was a constitutional defect which would always prevent him from getting well, and if so he felt quite determined to end his life. He was therefore very eager to have the LSD treatment as a last hope.

Past History. The patient joined up in the Army in 1940, and here his antisocial and paranoid feelings became worse, since he did not get on with the other men, and got beaten up by them quite often, and eventually he developed severe headaches and his stammer got worse, and he was discharged by a medical board after one and a half years.

He then went to Canada for three years hoping that he would fit into the social structure there better than in England, but the same thing happened, and he could not keep a job for more than two to three months, and felt people were laughing and talking about him.

On his return to England, he was sent to the Tavistock Clinic for treatment for his stammer, for which he had individual speech therapy, and his stammer improved slightly. He also attended for group treatment, but did not find this any help at all. While at the Tavistock Clinic, he had an intelligence test, and his I.Q. was found to be 138.

After the Tavistock Clinic, he attended several other hospital out-patient departments, and eventually in 1950 was referred to the Marlborough Day Hospital. Here he had individual psychotherapy with various doctors, and also some group treatment, but did not respond. He was then sent to the psychopathic unit at Belmont Hospital, where they specialize in the treatment of homosexuals, but here again he made no progress.

Early History. The patient was born while his father was away in Russia where he eventually died, so that the patient never saw his father. His mother had to go out to work from the beginning of his life, and left him with the grandparents. Very often they could not be bothered with him as he grew into a noisy rebellious little boy, so that they would push him on to anyone who would have him. He remembered quite clearly at the age of five, being left at a

public house, and talking to women whom later he knew were prostitutes, and who spoke to him about sex, and made him aware of his sex organ. There were no children of his own age with whom he could play, but he started going to the elementary school at the age of three, and stayed until fourteen. He disliked school intensely and could not make friends with children or staff. He slept in his mother's bedroom until twelve years old, and appeared to have a mixture of love and hate feelings for her, but otherwise had no object relationship.

After leaving school, the patient was taken on by his uncle as an assistant in his grocer's shop. Here he soon got into conflict with his uncle's wife who was strict with him, and he had to leave. Then he became an apprentice in the leather trade, and stayed there for three years, but then left because he could not get on with certain people there, and then he was out of work for three years until he joined the Army in 1940.

Procedure. The decision had now to be made as to whether the patient was suitable for LSD treatment, particularly under out-patient conditions. The criteria that I chose were as follows:

(*a*) No history of any previous psychotic episode.

(*b*) Some knowledge of his unconscious processes.

(*c*) Some degree of insight.

(*d*) A high intelligence.

(*e*) A good ego development.

(*f*) A strong desire to get well.

In my opinion the patient fulfilled all these conditions except that of having a good ego development, since he was too much dominated by his instinctual impulses, with a poor super-ego and ego development. There was therefore a possible danger of a paranoid psychosis developing as a result of treatment, but since he was in such a desperate state, I decided that the right thing would be to give him one treatment, and see what sort of reaction he had. If it was a paranoid reaction, then I would discontinue the treatment.

First LSD treatment reaction. One treatment of 50 gamma of LSD was given orally. The patient became more co-operative, and talked about his present day difficulties of getting on with people. He realized that he was suspicious of everyone, and that other people were not antagonistic to him. He felt more positive and hopeful as a result of the treatment. I therefore decided to continue the treatment, and at the following session I gave him 75 gamma.

Second LSD reaction (75 gamma). After one hour the patient became very cold and began shouting at me, and abusing me for neglecting him, and he wanted more blankets. It was a hot July day, but I gave him more blankets, but it did not make any difference. The patient said that he felt that he was lying in a pool of blood, and why did I not do something about it. I asked him how he came to think it was blood, and he said it felt smooth and oily. I asked him to be patient, and let himself go with the sensation, and see what came into his mind. He then said that he felt as though he had just been born, and was lying in a pool of blood, and that no one was bothering about him, because they were all bothered about his mother. Later on, I asked him to check up through his aunt, on the conditions of his birth, and she said that the mother had been

very ill before he was born, and she thought she had a haemorrhage, so that this may have been a true experience. At any rate, it made some difference to his horror of blood, because the next week he came to me saying that he had cut his finger badly, and previously would have fainted and shouted for someone to come, but this time he was able to look at it and then bind it up, and was not afraid of it as previously.

Third LSD reaction (100 gamma). Under this treatment the patient went back to his early childhood, and he re-experienced being left at the public house in the care of women who he later realized were prostitutes. He remembered how they used to tell him sexy stories, and play with him, and be amused because he had a big penis, and they told him what to do with it. He felt that he was encouraged to go round showing off what he could do with it, that he became very precocious and later on went round exposing himself to girls so that he got a bad name in the neighbourhood. He then began to use sexual swear words, and took delight in shouting them at myself, the sister or the nurse, and was annoyed if no response was given. This led on to very strong desires to attack sexually any woman who entered the room.

Fourth LSD reaction (125 gamma). The rape desires developed very quickly, particularly in relation to myself. He re-experienced the ambivalent relationship he had had towards his mother, at one moment hating me and saying I was old and ugly, and the next moment saying I was young and beautiful and wanting to make love to me. During this session he worked through a tremendous amount of transference material, and finally he re-experienced having made a deliberate sexual attack on his mother when he was still sharing her bedroom at the age of ten years. This liberated a tremendous amount of guilt and shame, and he remembered that after this event he went off girls, and later concentrated his sexual interests on men.

Fifth LSD reaction (150 gamma). During this session the patient experienced a great feeling of omnipotence, and thought he was the Emperor Nero, and that he had power over people's lives and could do with them what he wished, and he devised the most horrible cruelties to inflict on them, and derived great pleasure from this. Later on however he began to enquire why he should feel so sadistic, and it came to him that he had never forgiven his mother for deserting him by going out to work, and he had the phantasy that she was all powerful and had killed off his father and taken on his role herself. So she became a castrating figure to the patient. He said he used to feel the same about me, and be afraid of me, but now that he had expressed so much to me, he was no longer afraid of me. He even felt that he might be able to talk to women and feel friendly towards them in future.

Sixth, Seventh and Eighth LSD reactions (up to 200 gamma). The patient continued to relive incidents from his early childhood, and to continue working through various aspects of the transference situation. During this time I was able to encourage him to join one of our therapeutic social clubs which previously he had scorned, but now he entered into the activities with great enthusiasm, and was able to make contacts with both sexes, although very superficially.

After the eighth treatment the patient was unable to have further LSD since the general hospital which had been giving him a bed overnight after the treatment, were unable to do so any longer, and I could not allow him to go

back to a bed-sitting room on his own after treatment. He therefore came up to see me once a week for half an hour, and during this time I was satisfied that the process of stabilization was progressing steadily. He was continuing with the social club, and his relationships were getting easier. He had made a good relationship with a nurse whom he felt he might like to marry one day, and he had ceased having homosexual relationships altogether. He started to study French and Russian (unconsciously following in father's footsteps), at evening classes, and he got himself a new job which he said he liked.

About this time I was unable to see the patient any more, and transferred him to a male psychiatrist, who saw him once fortnightly and gave him an injection of methedrine. This seemed to help the patient to release the early infantile aggressive feelings which had been liberated under LSD and which still needed to be made more conscious in order to integrate them into his conscious personality, and which were connected mainly with the oedipal and castration complexes. These intense sadistic and hostile feelings had overwhelmed the ego and prevented it from normal development, but now that these feelings had been liberated in the transference situation, they were being resolved, and the ego became strong and was able to develop and integrate. In my opinion this could not have happened if I had not stayed with the patient throughout most of the LSD session when he was abreacting violently and working through transference feelings. If I had left him on his own, the conflicts would not have been resolved and he might have become more paranoid. It was more economical and effective to stay with him during these eight sessions than to give him years of psychoanalysis later.

Final Result. The patient got married to the nurse one year later, and is still happily married after five years. He has kept in the same job, and augments his income by doing French and Russian translations. He gets on well with colleagues, and has a few social friends. He and his wife hope to start a family shortly.

Conclusion

An account has been given of a psychopathic Jewish man of thirty-two, suffering from stammer and homosexuality, inability to keep a job or to get on with people, and contemplating suicide, who was treated with eight LSD treatments, and as a result of his re-experiencing of early incidents, including oedipal and castration complexes, in a transference relationship with the therapist, he was able to resolve these infantile conflicts, and free the ego to develop and integrate, so that eventually he was able to marry, and settle down in a harmonious heterosexual relationship.