

Mental Illness Increases

Psychiatrists Thrive In Colleges

SEATTLE, WASH. (UPI)—It doesn't carry the same glamor with the college crowd as with the Jet Set, but students in increasing numbers are finding a need for the analyst's couch.

At the University of Washington, for instance, Dr. Gordon G. Bergy says emotional problems account for more students withdrawing from school than all other health problems combined.

Bergy, director of student health, believes Washington's case is the rule, not the exception.

The university tries to meet the challenge through its student psychiatric clinic, directed by Dr. Benjamin M. Taylor.

Taylor will not discuss specific cases, nor will he comment on University of Texas student Charles J. Whitman who revealed his urge to kill to a school psychiatrist before shooting 14 persons to death from the tower on the Austin campus last August.

Taylor has been with the clinic 10 years. In that period he has seen use of the clinic grow at a rate surpassing the increase in enrollment which has doubled over the past decade.

The clinic handled 1,153 referrals last year. Of these, 657 were "patients" with the remainder categorized "under consultation" or similar headings.

The clinic usually is booked full by fall quarter's end, although no one goes unattended, Taylor says.

More significant than the mere increased incidence of emotional disturbance, says Taylor, is the alarming growth of "serious" mental illness.

"When I first came here," he said, "we saw mostly problems of 'dependence'."

Students approached the clinic with difficulties of newfound independence from parents, novel social requirements and academic demands.

"We saw a lot of kids who were simply overwhelmed. They were just seeking direction," said Taylor.

"They were looking for direct support, encouragement, reassurance. They wanted to

be told, 'everything will be all right.'"

All this has changed in the span of a decade.

"Now we see more specific and severe illnesses," said the clinic's director.

"We certainly see more psychoses. And the thing that really bothers us is the increased occurrence of depression."

Taylor defines depression as a general slow-down in function, a retardation even to the point of immobilization. Persons so afflicted harbor feelings of unworthiness and inadequacy, with disruption of sleep and appetite.

He mentions one more manifestation of depression; thoughts of self-destruction.

Robert Nelson, chief psychiatric social worker for the clinic, said suicidal tendencies are very strong among young adults, and Dr. Bergy cited a current study indicating suicide as the fifth leading cause of death among persons aged 15-19.

The student magazine Moderator, based in Philadelphia, predicted that 10,000 persons in colleges and graduate schools will attempt suicide in 1966 and 1,000 will succeed.

On student suicides at Washington, Bergy said "one or

two" a year is a "fair figure."

Dean of Men Reginald D. Root says four student suicides were confirmed last year, with another recorded already this year.

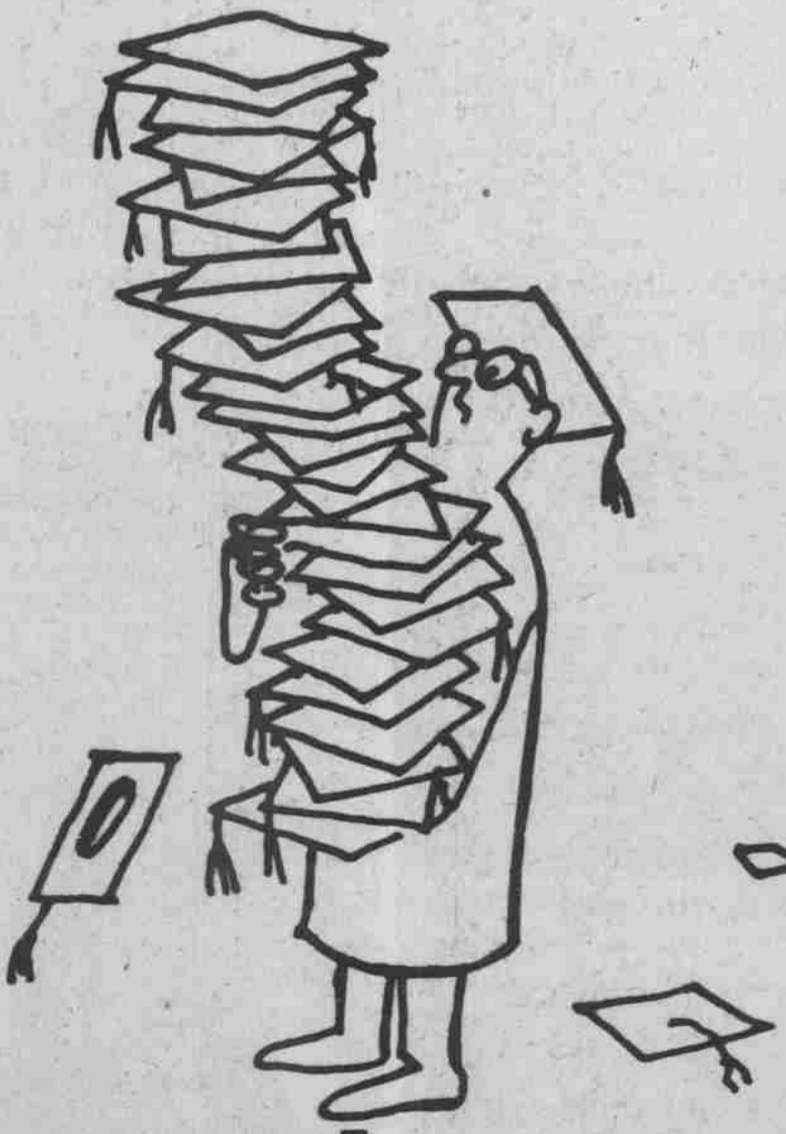
Taylor explained that much of the "pressure" comes from America's social and economic system, the demands of which are revealed to students by their education.

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