

## Are they adequate?...

# Health and Psych Services at York

by Heather Slack

Only one Canadian University even approaches the recommended standard of the American Health Association - and it is not York.

According to a Report on Health and Psychiatric Services on Canadian Campuses by Dr. Conrad Schwartz of the University of British Columbia, only Dalhousie University comes close to meeting the requirements of one physician and one nurse per 1,000 students.

Where does York fall short? To answer these and other questions Excalibur interviewed Dr. Neil Agnew, head of Psychological Services on York Campus; Mrs. J. Cutt of the Health Services and a sample group of day and resident students.

As of December 1, 1966, York Campus had 1340 undergraduate students, approximately 250 of these being resident in Founders College. To meet their needs the University employs a nurse and a physician, both part-time.

### HEALTH SERVICES

Directly behind the Porter's Office in Founders Residence are the Health Service offices where the doctor is available for

consultation Tuesday and Friday mornings. In addition, a physician is on 24-hour call to handle emergency cases which are referred at the nurse's discretion to Humber Memorial Hospital.

At present York Campus has only a one-bed infirmary which is seldom used as most resident students with infectious diseases are advised to remain in their rooms or told to go home. However, the infirmary is available, at the nurse's discretion, to day students who wish to rest because of illness for a short period during the day.

Part-time nurse Mrs. J. Cutt sees the present functions of the Health Services as 'preventative medicine and emergency treatment'. For chronic difficulties and any 'follow-ups' after emergency treatment by the University Health Service, Mrs. Cutt says that day students are expected to consult their private physicians. Similarly, because of the extensive time involved, all students should have the compulsory university medicals done by their own doctors.

Mrs. Cutt believes our present student population is not large enough to warrant a full-time resident physician as the Schwartz Report recommends. She feels that since the doctor's consultation periods are never overcrowded, our present facilities are adequate.



Mrs. Cutt Smiles

### STUDENT IGNORANCE

Mrs. Cutt's assessment of present adequacy is correct - with one exception. That is, the ignorance among day and resident students about the location of the Health Services.

Only two of the twenty resident students interviewed did not know where to find the Health Services and some had had occasion to use the facilities provided.

But of the twenty day students interviewed, only two knew the location of the Health Services. Yet all these students pay tuition fees, a portion of which are allocated to the Health Services. Not one of these students had ever used the services although occasions had arisen when they might have - for example, a routine check-up required before a student may play on any university athletic team.

This evident ignorance is not due to any inadequacy on the part of the Health Services. The blame rests with those students who do not take the trouble to read notices which have been posted for their benefit in both colleges since the beginning of the school year.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

In his report, Dr. Schwartz calculates that .5 full-time professional psychiatric team members should be available for each 1,000 students. He makes a clear distinction between Psychiatric Services and Counselling Services, intimating the superiority of the former. Clearly this judgment is medically oriented. He feels the counselling of a medically trained psychiatrist to be of more value to students than that of a psychologist who would probably not possess an M.D.

Dr. Neil Agnew of York is not in agreement with the Schwartz model. Psychological and health services 'should be separate but complementary in function.' Dr. Agnew feels that the roles of the two services on campus are entirely different. He says, 'A medical doctor tells you what to do whereas advice is not the psychologist's cure-all. We're really here to 'coach' the student and help him work toward a satisfactory solution of the problem at hand.'

Furthermore, Dr. Agnew sees our merged psychiatric and counselling services as a more serviceable model. Between the two campuses five part-time psychiatric consultants are available. In addition, on York Campus we have four PhD psychologists, three full-time and one part-time, as well as one team member in training.

Psychological Services has an office in each college as well as its main location of the first floor of the Behavioural Sciences Building.

All the students interviewed knew the location of Psychological Services. Reading and study habits tests given during orientation week were no doubt responsible for this improved student awareness.

The function of Psychological Services on campus is to help students cope with the whole university experience from study habits through romantic or family problems.

To this end, the Service is developing a multi-faceted staff whose functions vary from listener to coach. They are willing to discuss problems, actively work toward solutions, retrain students (especially in the area of reading skills), and recommend psychiatric care where necessary.

### EXPANSION PLANS

The Health Services plan to expand with the University. Next year there will be a full-time nurse - possibly two working on a shift. The Health Service offices, together with a larger infirmary will be found on the second floor of Vanier Tower which was chosen for its central location. Increasing student enrollment may also mean that the doctor will be needed on campus an additional morning per week. This three-morning week is as yet unconfirmed.



Dr. Agnew Smirks



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