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NARCOTIC ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH: THE CLINICAL PAPERS OF LAWRENCE KOLB SR



Dr. Lawrence Kolb was a pioneer in the medical approach to narcotics addiction treatment and in public health research and treatment of mental illness. He was one of the first to advocate treating drug addicts as patients, not criminals. The collection deals chiefly with the subjects of drug addiction, alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, and mental health.

Date Range: 1912-1972

Content: 16,954 images

Source Library: History of Medicine Division, National Library of Medicine

Detailed Description:

Dr. Lawrence Kolb was a pioneer in the medical approach to narcotics addiction treatment and in public health research and treatment of mental illness. He was born in Galesville, Md., February 20, 1881, and graduated from the University of Maryland medical school in 1908. The next year he was commissioned an Assistant Surgeon in the Public Health Service. From 1913 to 1919, he was stationed at the Ellis Island, New York Immigration Station specializing in the mental disease and illness of incoming aliens. During this same period, he also developed a program for the study and treatment of post-World War I patients suffering from war-caused neuroses. In 1923, Dr. Kolb came to Washington, D.C. and spent five years studying drug addiction and its relationship to crime. He was one of the first to advocate treating drug addicts as patients, not criminals. By 1934, Dr. Kolb was an international expert in the study of psychiatry and narcotics, and was appointed head of the Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky to lead the U.S. government's first experimental unit for treating drug addicts. His final duty station was as Chief of the Public Health Service Mental Hygiene Division from 1938-1944. He was promoted to Assistant Surgeon General in 1942. His work there, along with that of Dr. Thomas Parran, led to the creation of the National Institute for Mental Health in 1946.

This collection consists of correspondence, reports, documents clippings, reprints and photos; and include these correspondents: Clifford W. Beers, Rupert Blue, F. A. Carmelia,

Hugh S. Cumming, Robert H. Felix, Richmond P. Hobson, Adolph Meyer, W. F. Ossenfort, Thomas Parran, C. C. Pierce, Carleton Simon, Walter L. Treadway, and Lloyd H. Ziegler.

The National Library of Medicine has compiled a finding aid for this collection. It can be found at [NLM](#)

Publishers Note: The Clinical Papers of Lawrence Kolb Sr. provide a wealth of information about the workings of the public service procedures employed to scrutinize immigrants applying to enter the United States, the development of a medical approach to the problems of addiction, and the kind of research undertaken by Kolb and his contemporaries. We have made every effort to provide users of the digital collection with the most complete collection possible while being extremely attentive to issues of privacy and copyright. Items that remain available at the National Library of Medicine but that have been de-selected or redacted in the digital publication to ensure anonymity, include personal financial information, personnel files, evaluations of staff and medical personnel for the public health service, names associated with the results of mental tests performed on potential immigrants, and from addicts seeking Dr. Kolb's assistance. Out of concern for copyright, journals found in the research files of Dr. Kolb that were published after 1930 have been deselected. Title pages have been retained to provide a bibliographic reference for users. Newspaper clippings were also reviewed in order to respect copyright.