

Oaks warns of psychiatric abuse

By Carrie Dennett
Emerald Associate Editor

When David Oaks was a student at Harvard University in the early 1970s, he was placed in psychiatric hospitals five times.

One time, when he dumped a dose of liquid Thorazine on the floor rather than following orders to swallow it, he was surrounded by male hospital workers, thrown in solitary confinement, and given a forcible drug injection.

This practice of solitary confinement followed by forcible injection was not uncommon, said Oaks, coordinator of the Clearinghouse on Human Rights and Psychiatry.

In one case, a male psychiatric patient suffered a heart attack while struggling against the orderlies forcing him into solitary. The doctor returned, gave the patient a drug injection, then realized the patient was dead.

"They gave a forcible injection to a 'dangerous dead person,'" Oaks said, speaking to about 20 people Thursday, at the university.

Oaks called psychiatric drugs a "liquid lobotomy" that some people agree to take, but is often given without choice.

Young people are especially vulnerable to being drugged forcibly, or with a lesser level of coercion, when the are perceived as having a psychiatric problem, he said.

Oaks said the number of teenagers in private mental institutions has increased as much as 400 percent in recent years.

In Eugene, 252 children are diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Disorder, for which the drug Ritalin, a form of speed, is typically prescribed, he said.

Oaks said the public needs to question why these children are drugged, and why no one considers that it may be unnatural to confine small children in a room for several hours a day.

Oaks said the frequent use of drugs that is a part of modern psychiatry is linked to industrialized society.

Industrialized society is an extremely organized system, he said, which brings certain benefits but has the negative characteristic of being a system with a hierarchical form of control.

The society's need for control does not allow people to be different, he said, and takes extreme measures to subdue people diagnosed with mental disturbances.

Oaks said University students are at risk of being given these forms of treatment, because a number of students are referred to Sacred



Photo by Sean Poston
David Oaks, coordinator of the Clearinghouse on Human Rights and Psychiatry, spoke at the University Thursday about the dangers of psychiatric drugs.

Heart General Hospital for treatment each year. Electroshock therapy has become more common recently at Sacred Heart, said Oaks, who has organized protests against its use.

Oaks accused the hospital of not placing complete information about electroshock's risks in the consent forms patients sign, and of not acknowledging that permanent memory loss can be a result.

A student in the audience said she is unhappy with how quickly the University Health Center diagnoses students as having a particular mental illness and offers psychotic drugs.

In 1990 she began suffering from extreme anxiety attacks. She received 12 weeks of counseling from the Counseling Center, the maximum time allowed per student. She then sought help from a Health Center psychiatrist.

After 20 minutes with the psychiatrist, she was diagnosed with the words "Congratulations, you're the proud owner of an anxiety disorder," and gave her a medical instruction sheet for a powerful anti-depressant.

The student said she declined drug treatment, because she believes in holistic healing, but she later went back several times to voice her dismay at how she was handled.

Oaks recommended that students pursuing psychiatry as a career look for alternative ways of helping people by empowering them and giving them a variety of options to help them through their mental distress.

Astronaut visits campus

By Carrie Dennett
Emerald Associate Editor

Astronaut Steven Hawley, who deployed the Hubble space telescope from the space shuttle Discovery in 1990, will speak at the University tonight, kicking off a new University seminar series titled "Frontiers in Science."

Hawley will show a videotape and slides of the Discovery mission, and will discuss information the telescope has made available. The seminar will be followed by a tour through part of the University science complex, and a demonstration in the laser laboratory.

NASA selected Hawley to be an astronaut in 1978. He has completed three missions for a total of 412 hours in space.

Hawley, 40, flew aboard the orbiter Discovery in 1984 and aboard the Columbia in 1986. The shuttle Discovery flight in 1990 orbited the Earth 76 times in 121 hours.

During the five-day mission, Hawley successfully deployed the Hubble Space Telescope using the orbiter's robot arm.

In his current assignment with NASA, Hawley is associate director of the agency's Ames Research Center at Moffett Field, Calif.

He holds a doctoral degree in astronomy and astrophysics from the University of California at Santa Cruz. His sister, Diane Hawley, is a University assistant professor of chemistry.

The talks by Hawley and by other speakers in the new seminar series are aimed at general audiences. The seminars are designed to familiarize people with some of the current issues in science and with related projects at the University, said Howard Reese, a research associate in the University Institute of Molecular Biology.

The seminar series is sponsored by the University and by Spectra-Physics Scanning Systems, Inc., of Eugene.

Hawley's appearance is scheduled for 8 p.m. in Room 100 Willamette Hall. Admission is free and open to the public. Free parking is available in the visitors' lot at the corner of East 13th Avenue and Agate Street.

ET ALS

MEETINGS

Grooks Against Rape will meet Sunday night at 7 in the EMU Ben Linder Room.

Mentorship Program will have a retreat-planning meeting today at 3 in the Koinonia Center.

MISCELLANEOUS

"Ecological Degradation in the Sahel: Jumping Off the Overgrazing Bandwagon" will be the title of a lecture by Matt Turner of the University of California Berkeley today at 3:30 p.m. in Room 16 Pacific.

"Dreamworlds: Desire, Sex and Power in Rock Videos" will be shown today at 2:30 p.m. in IMC Studio C.

EMU Board of Directors Budget Committee will have a public hearing today at 3:30 p.m. in EMU Room 20 B.

RELIGION

"Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?" will be the title of a roundtable discussion sponsored by the Restoration

Campus Ministry today at 12:30 p.m. in the EMU Skylight Lounge.

Shabbat gathering will be tonight at Carol and Hanan's home with Kabbalat-Shabbat at 7:30 followed by a vegetarian potluck and Oneg with stories and song. For information about directions and rides call Hillal at 343-8920.

Weekend Masses will be Saturday night at 5 and Sunday at 9 and 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Newman Club will follow at 8:45 p.m. at the Newman Center, 1650 Emerald St.

Deadline for submitting Et Als to the Emerald front desk, EMU Suite 300, is noon the day before publication. Et Als run the day of the event unless the event takes place before noon.

Notices of events with a donation or admission charge will not be accepted. Campus events and those scheduled nearest the publication date will be given priority. The Emerald reserves the right to edit notices for grammar and style.

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