

February 2004

Medical and psychiatric standpoints on why Narconon shall be denied permission to manage the rehabilitation of drug addicts. Appendix to the appeal from the community board of Welfare.

Facts

The Narconon program does not differentiate between the different types of addiction problems. The same method is used on all addicts without being able to produce any scientific evidence that all addiction problems can be fully and acceptably treated with one and the same method.

When trying the request of permission to start this treatment, the burden of proof, whether the Narconon program is fulfilling the demands and requirements or not, should be upon the applicant. This should especially be the case in matters of risks, security and efficacy to the individual.

Narconon has not been able to show that the program are either secure or efficient. To the contrary, there are a significant body of scientific evidence showing the Narconon program to be dangerous as well as inefficient.

The applicant's documentation fails to show how the Narconon program prevents the risks of late abstinence phenomenon such as seizures, deliriums, and / or hallucinations. These conditions are potentially life-threatening.

Drug elimination

The Narconon program requires that clients shall sweat in five hour long saunas each day, seven days a week.

Narconon states that this extreme sweating is required to free the body of drugs and chemicals stored in the fat tissue.

This statement is in total lack of scientific evidence. (see investigation from Prof. Folke Sjökvist, expert advisor to the National Board of Health and Welfare. 1996-11-26)

Vitamins

The Narconon program includes overdosing of vitamins and minerals. The use of the stated doses, according to medical expert opinion, is potentially dangerous. Liver damage and acute liver failure are mentioned as such risks. The doses are above the recommended maximum doses by the National food administration.

Drug addiction and psychiatric illness

Simultaneous drug addiction and psychiatric illness are common. Depending on the drug in question, different serious psychiatric symptoms can be camouflaged and produced respectively, other symptoms will be shown and augmented during the abstinence phase. Psychiatric competence is therefore vital when treating people with drug – and alcohol addiction. The documents in application fails to show how this competence shall be upheld to the benefit of the clients. Psychiatric competence are completely lacking in the named staff personnel.

It is stated in the application that the targeted group of treatment are drug addicts without any serious psychiatric illness. Nothing emerges however in the application, how the selection of the targeted group can be secured.

Physical exertions in combination with saunabathing

The Narconon program includes physical exertions "to stimulate blood circulation" followed by the 5 hour long saunabaths at high temperatures. Combined, these activities exposes the clients to serious physical and mental health risks. The procedures exposes the individual to risks of dehydration and heat damages. The sauna program can lead to hyperthermia and disturbances in the electrolytic balance (eg heat stroke and disturbed bodily salt balance) that can lead to serious disturbances in the heart's electrical activity system with the risk of fatal sudden cardiac arrest.

Misleading information on competence

Statements in application about cognitive therapy cannot be proved by CV:s on staff members in application. Cognitive Therapy can only be performed by those with adequate education and training in this therapy method.

The fact that Narconon staff and management are in total lack of any adequate education in caregiving, especially regarding the work with drug addicts, is a security risk regarding the physical and mental health of the clients.

Other risks

The strict personal limitations and rules put upon the clients in the Narconon program, restricting the clients possibilities contacting a physician, family members, social workers and other to the client important people, are another hazard to the clients physical and mental health.

The clients rights and possibility to read all that are documented about them, must be secured. The routines within Narconon on the "ethic files" of their clients, needs clarification. The clients right and possibility to take part of those files must be guaranteed and secured as must the possibility to the client, at any time, contact supervising authorities. The legal security of the client may otherwise be illegally compromised and restricted.

No part of the Narconon program during the stay at the facility or during the followup, contains followup of pathological bloodtests or other medical

problems. This is not according to law as stated in the regulations from the National Board of Health and Welfare (SOSF 2003:20) nor is it in accordance to praxis in the treatment of drugaddiction.

Summary

It is our firm and unanimous judgement that :

- The Narcononprogram in its parts and as a whole puts unacceptable risks upon the physical and mental health of their clients .
- The content of the program with saunabaths, physical exertions , overdosing of vitamins and minerals , are to be viewed as potentially hazardous healthrisks and not as a certified effective treatment to augmentate drogelimination.
- All named staff lacks proper and adequate education and competence as stated in national regulations and laws in conjunction with the work they are supposed to do.
- Specialized psychiatric competence are required to secure the selection process of the target group of drugaddicts and to minimize the risks of violence on the facility.
- Referrals to outside organizations such as the PITA Group I/C . National Board of Addiction Examiners together with personal "certificates" on staff from any of these organizations , are irrelevant. The relations between Narconon and these organizations are at best obscure. The organizations in question are not a part of any federal or governmental supported activity. Certifying treatmentcentres or caregiving facilities , are illegal in this country accordding to the National Board of Health and Welfare.

Per Thorslund
Chiefpsychiatrist
Psychiatric clinic
Värnamo

Vagn Liest
Chiefpsychiatrist
Psychiatric clinic
Hoegland Hospital

Bo- Kenneth Knutsson
Manager
Psychiatric clinic
Hoegland Hospital

Olof Blix
Senior psychiatrist
Addiction unit
Jonkoping Ryhov

Ulf Brettstam
Assist.Chiefpsychiatrist
Psychiatric clinic
Hoegland Hospital

Hans Gränefelt
Hospitalmanager
Hoegland Hospital