

**THE ALCOHOLIC "REPEATER" OR
CHRONIC DRUNKARD. STATE
CHARITIES AID ASSOCIATION
NO. 113, FEBRUARY 15, 1910**

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NO. 113, FEBRUARY 15, 1910**

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No. 113
STATE CHARITIES AID ASSOCIATION
OF NEW YORK

THE
ALCOHOLIC "REPEATER"
OR
CHRONIC DRUNKARD

Standing Committee on Hospitals
of the State Charities Aid Association

February 15, 1910

NEW YORK CITY
UNITED CHARITIES BUILDING
105 EAST 22nd STREET

1910

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THE ALCOHOLIC "REPEATER" OR CHRONIC DRUNKARD.

It is a general impression that many persons are repeatedly admitted to the workhouse and to the alcoholic wards of public hospitals, as well as to other institutions because of their habitual drunkenness. It has not been known, however, up to this time, how many people are so admitted nor how many times they have been committed. Indeed, the records in most public institutions are so kept that they effectively, if unintentionally, conceal connected individual records or histories. An effort has been made in the following pages to answer so far as possible these questions and to trace out in detail typical, individual histories. Two facts have interfered with the complete success of this effort.

1. The fact that little effort is made in most of the public institutions to identify the persons as they come again and again and to keep a record of their appearances.

2. The fact that the records of many of the institutions are nothing more than daily entry records. As a result, it is necessary to examine the records of thousands of persons in order to secure the record of any one person.

Most of the statistics presented in this study are statistics for New York City. No extended effort has been made to secure records from other cities, but a few such records are inserted simply to show that New York City is by no means unique in having this problem to deal with. Some of the longest records presented come from cities outside of New York.

MALE ALCOHOLIC WARD OF BELLEVUE HOSPITAL.

NEW YORK CITY.

The records of the male alcoholic ward at Bellevue were carefully examined for the year May 1, 1908, to May 1, 1909, for the purpose of determining to what extent persons repeatedly receive treatment there for acute alcoholism.

*"Recidivist" is a more elegant term, but is not satisfactory because it is correctly applied only to persons appearing repeatedly in penal institutions. Statistics show, however, that there are many "repeaters" who do not appear in the courts at all.

The following statistics include all of the patients in the male alcoholic ward of Bellevue Hospital from May 1, 1908, to May 1, 1909. There are doubtless many repeaters who are not shown by these statistics, because of the fact that persons constantly come to the ward and give false names. There is no correction for this in the records of the hospital except so far as a person is recognized by the nurses in the alcoholic ward. The statistics, therefore, are very conservative, and absolute identification would undoubtedly increase greatly the number of repeaters.

THE FOLLOWING TABLES SUMMARIZE THE STATISTICS:

I.—May 1, 1908—May 1, 1909.

Total number admissions	6,965
Total number persons treated	6,033
Total number of persons treated only once..	5,535
Total number of persons treated more than once	498
Total days' treatment; all patients.....	22,885
Total days' treatment; persons treated only once	18,301
Total days' treatment; persons treated more than once	4,584
Average days' treatment; persons treated only once	3.3
Average days' treatment; persons treated more than once	9.2
Total cost treatment; persons treated only once	\$28,915.58
Total cost treatment; persons treated more than once	\$ 7,242.72

II.—Persons Treated More than Once During the Year.

Number of times treated.	Number of persons.
2	284
3	110
4	55
5	20
6	17
7	3
8	2
9	2
10	1
11	3
12	1

It will be noted from these tables that twenty-nine persons were treated six or more times during this year, 104 were treated four or more times and 214 three or more times. It will also be noted that 4,584 or nearly one-fourth of the days' treatment for the whole ward was given to 498 persons or one-twelfth of the total number of persons treated, and that the average number of days' treatment for the repeater is about three times as great as that of the person treated only once. The per capita per diem expense of maintaining patients in Bellevue is given in the last printed report of the Trustees of Bellevue and Allied Hospitals as \$1.58. This would make the cost of treating the alcoholic repeater in the male alcoholic ward of that institution for this one year, \$7,242.72.

After the total number of known repeaters for the given year was determined, the records of all those who appeared four or more times during the year were examined for the preceding four years, and their complete hospital record in the alcoholic ward for five successive years was thus secured.

Of the one hundred and four persons who had been treated four or more times during the year, sixty-five were found to have previous records in the alcoholic ward. The statistics for these sixty-five are as follows:

No. of treatments.	No. of persons.	Total days treatment.
5	5	73
6	8	136
7	12	266
8	7	199
9	4	150
10	1	27
11	5	167
12	5	193
14	6	308
15	2	87
16	1	46
17	1	103
18	1	60
19	1	80
20	1	244
21	2	250
23	2	195
23	1	53
Total.....	65	2,637

Total cost of treating 65 persons during the five years \$4,166.46

The following six records show striking examples of the repeater brought out by these statistics:

ADMITTED	DISCHARGED	DAYS	TREATMENT
September 6, 1904	September 7, 1904	2	
October 7	October 8	2	
November 4	November 5	2	
August 4, 1905	August 5, 1905	2	
June 19, 1906	June 20, 1906	2	
August 28	August 29	2	
May 10, 1907	May 13, 1907	4	
August 12	August 13	2	
September 26	September 28	3	
November 26	November 28	3	
December 25	December 26	2	
April 16, 1908	April 18, 1908	3	
June 24	June 25	2	
July 7	July 8	2	
July 25	July 26	2	
August 16	August 17	2	
September 18	September 19	2	
October 1	October 2	2	
October 13	October 14	2	
November 11	November 12	2	
November 28	November 29	2	
December 14	December 15	2	
December 26	December 27	2	
January 27, 1909	January 28, 1909	2	
Total number times treated.....			24
Total number days treated.....			53
Total cost treatment			\$83.74

ADMITTED	DISCHARGED	DAYS	TREATMENT
August 10, 1904	August 12, 1904	3	
September 29	September 30	2	
October 3	October 11	8	
January 4, 1905	January 8, 1905	5	
May 7	May 9	3	
November 10	November 13	4	
November 8	November 9	2	
December 2	December 4	3	
June 27, 1907	June 28, 1907	2	
June 29	June 30	2	
January 29, 1908	January 30, 1908	2	
February 19	February 20	2	
January 31, 1908	February 1, 1908	2	
March 14	March 16	3	
December 22	December 23	2	
December 28	January 2, 1909	6	
January 7, 1909	January 8	2	
January 22	January 24	3	
February 24	February 25	2	
March 1	March 2	2	
March 9	March 10	2	
March 11	March 13	3	
April 5	April 6	2	
Total number times treated.....			23
Total number days treated.....			67
Total cost treatment			\$105.86