

**The University Health Services.** W.H.O. Technical Report Series No. 320. Geneva. Pp. 21. Price 3s. 6d. (also published in French and Spanish).

“*L'explosion scolaire*” is a world-wide phenomenon resulting from population growth and the opening up of general and higher education to larger segments of the population. Everywhere there is a commitment to expand universities at an unprecedented rate, creating organizational and sociological problems of great magnitude. Not the least of these are concerned with the physical and mental health of the students themselves. These problems cannot always easily be solved by the health agencies available to the general population. Students, away from home for the first time, with little guidance, have to learn to manage their own affairs and adjust to strange conditions. Added to these anxieties, which are more marked in students from abroad, are the stress of study and examinations, and financial difficulties. To many it is their first co-educational venture and the problems that arise add to the vulnerability of the student. Specific environmental health problems are encountered in laboratories and in communal residences.

The W.H.O. expert committee which sat in April 1965, strongly recommended that these matters can only be dealt with effectively by special university health services. Their report is a lucid description of the scope of such services. It ranges widely over student health surveillance and health education, and pays special attention to mental health and the particular health problems of the expatriate student.

The report points out the value, though limited, of the contribution a university health service might make to the teaching of preventive medicine to medical undergraduates and postgraduates. Such a service might be a rich source of opportunities for medical research. Apart from the armed forces, there is probably nowhere a ‘captive’ population of the same magnitude and age-range as the student body of a university.

The committee wisely avoided attempting to lay down a standard structure for a university health service because of differing needs and conditions in various countries. To begin with, a small unit as part of the department of medicine, associated with social medicine, might be sufficient. The director of the service should be a physician with administrative experience and knowledgeable in public health matters. His ability to understand young people and to create the right sort of liaison with university staff was most important. In a fully developed unit the director and staff should be accorded appropriate academic status.

The report concludes by arguing strongly in favour of such schemes. A major point is made of the need to protect students, the future leaders of our communities from the special risks to which they are exposed. University health schemes can help to promote health consciousness in students and to demonstrate to them the value of well-organized health services in the protection of life and the promotion of efficiency.

Seldom has one had the good fortune to read a clearer and more succinct report on a topic of current medical importance.