

Indian substance abuse

Professor: Durg- and alcohol-treatment programs weak

By Mary Nell Westbrook
Staff Reporter

Treatment programs have not helped curtail an increase in alcohol and drug abuse and in serious crimes among Native Americans, a UNL professor said last week.

Early prevention is the key to stopping drug and alcohol abuse, which often leads to crime, said Elizabeth Grobsmith at a Center for Great Plains Studies seminar.

Grobsmith, a UNL associate professor of anthropology, conducted a study of 102 jailed Native Americans from 15 tribes. She found that 90 to 100 percent of the crimes committed were drug- and alcohol-related.

Treatment programs have failed because of the absence of negative sanctions against drunkenness in Indian society, she said. Sixty-two percent of those studied said a person should forgive and forget what another person did while drunk.

"The Indians feel no shame in being drunk," Grobsmith said.

Programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous haven't worked because many Indians don't want to get up in front of others, she said.

The failure of treatment programs and an increase in alcohol and drug use among the young Native American have swung the pendulum of efforts from treatment to prevention.

The roots of the problems begin at a young age, she said.

"More Indian youth use drugs and alcohol than American youth," Grobsmith said.

The average age of a Native American's arrest is 15.6. Some are arrested as early as age 8, she said.

The juvenile justice system has been ineffective, Grobsmith said, because



Doug Carroll/Daily Nebraskan

Grobsmith

Indian youth arrested for drinking are sent home to drunk parents — where the problem began. Most Native American youth have alcoholic or physically and mentally abusive parents.

"Parents who are drunk can hardly teach their children the perils of alcohol," Grobsmith said.

Tribal planning efforts, aimed mostly at children, have been set up to combat

the problem.

A \$5 million appropriation from Congress specifically for substance-abuse prevention is hoped to be granted to the Native Americans.

"It's really just a drop in the bucket. It won't pay for much but it will allow tribes to start their own programs," Grobsmith said.

Hersh criticizes Reagan's politics

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for the West German disco bombing, he said.

Reagan told the media he ordered the bombing of Libya to thwart future acts of terrorism, Hersh said.

There was some question "whether we had targeted Gadhafi personally or if the bomb just happened to fall on his tent," Hersh said.

He questioned whether there is a difference between "state-sponsored" and other kinds of terrorism.

In August, the White House decided to send false reports to the press that the United States was planning to bomb Libya again, Hersh said. But Reagan did not regard speculations on Gadhafi's possible retaliations if he heard these reports, he said.

Hersh is now a free-lance investiga-

tive reporter and national correspondent for the "Atlantic Monthly." He won a Pulitzer Prize for international reporting in 1970 for the uncovering of the My Lai massacre in Vietnam. He has also won the Polk Award, the Scribbs-Howard Public Service Award and the Zenger Freedom of the Press Award for his investigation of the CIA's involvement in the overthrow of Chile.



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