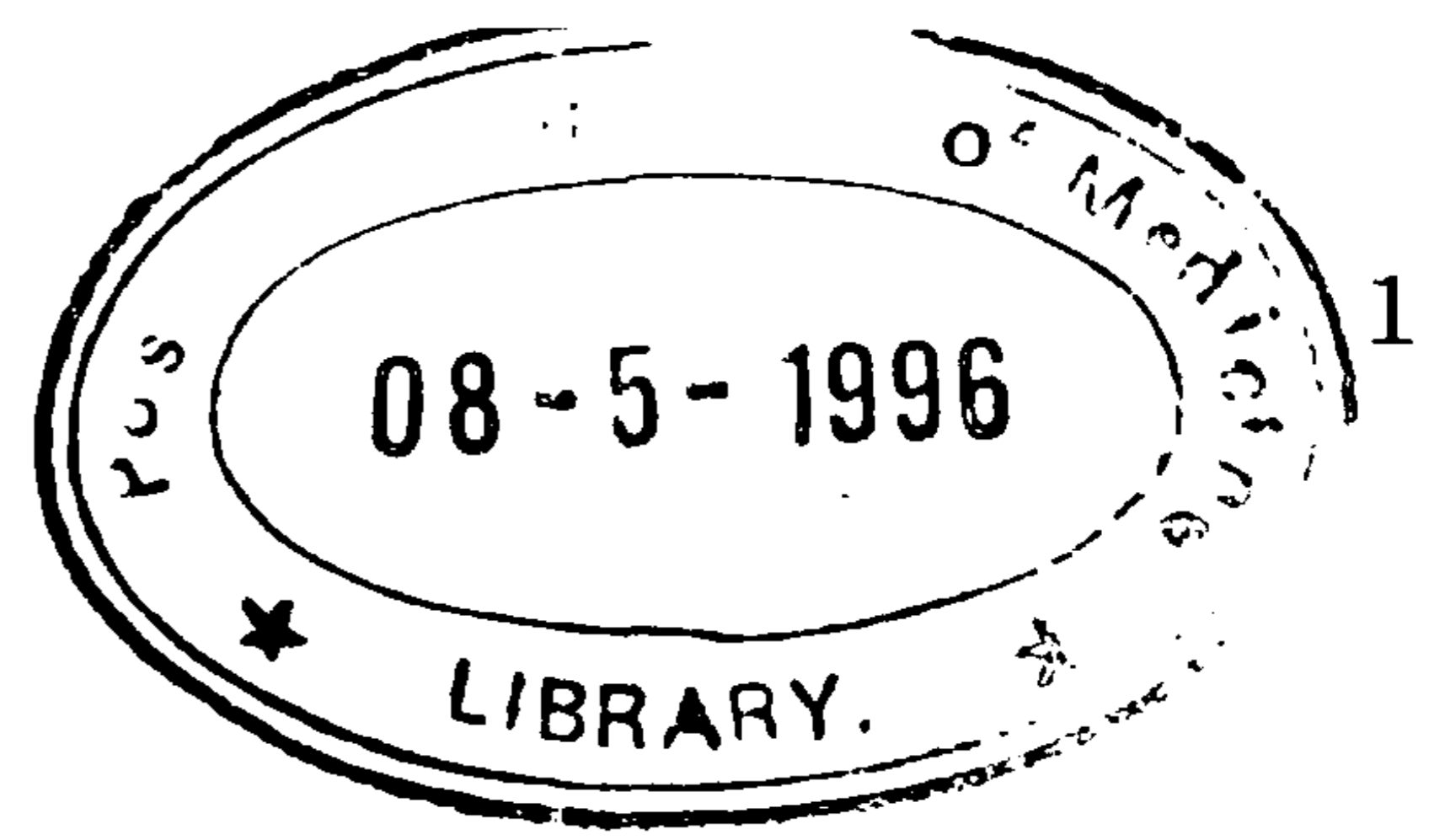


ABSTRACT



25 subjects with neuroses and 53 subjects with alcohol dependence were selected from those attending the University Psychiatry Unit Colombo , the Mental Hospital Mulleriyawa and Mel Medura, a specialized alcohol rehabilitation unit.

Their anxiety levels - state and trait, alcohol dependence and use of alcohol when anxious were assessed by administering respectively the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory of Spielberger, The Munich Alcoholism Test and a questionnaire designed specifically for this study.

It was found that of the 25 patients with neuroses there were 8 (32%) who were alcohol dependent. There were 10 patients with neuroses who used alcohol when anxious (one of whom was borderline dependent and one not dependent) of whom only 2 (8%) used alcohol consistently when anxious and 8 (32%) sometimes. Even in these 10, only 2 (8%) found that alcohol always helped in reducing anxiety and 6(24%) sometimes.

In the alcohol dependent group consisting of 53 subjects only 2 (3.8%) were diagnosed as having a concurrent neurosis. However as a group their mean anxiety scores were higher than in the normal population. In this group 17 (32%) always used

alcohol when anxious of whom 5 (9%) found that it always helped and 6 (11%) only sometimes. 31 (58%) subjects used alcohol sometimes when anxious of whom 7 (13%) found that it always helped and 27(51%) that it helped only sometimes.

There was significantly greater use of alcohol for anxiety by the alcohol dependent group but both groups studied did not find alcohol a reliable or consistent anxiolytic and there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups as regards the efficacy of alcohol as an anxiolytic .

In the alcohol dependent group there is some doubt as to whether what was interpreted as relief of anxiety was that of withdrawal effects.