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Kicking the habit

*There's
no magic
bullet*

Re the Aug. 4 Tropical Life story *Alcohol-drug rehab — It's wake-up call concerning addiction treatment*. It is a sad truth that people fighting addictions often fail. Unfortunately, there is no cure for the disease of addiction. There is only sustained recovery if the addict chooses sobriety.

As a licensed psychotherapist and certified addiction specialist, I know that breaking the addiction cycle also depends on the drug of choice. Some addicts try several methods before finding the treatment that works for them. Most times, a 12-step program or intervention-treatment facilities (whether inpatient, outpatient, community-based or private therapy) may be the only answer. The long-term goal of any treatment is to change the person's life so that drug use is no longer an option. However, addiction is a tough cycle to break, and treatment is not a guaranteed option. Many addicts find the drug-free lifestyle and treatment environment hard to cope with. Denial interferes with recovery.

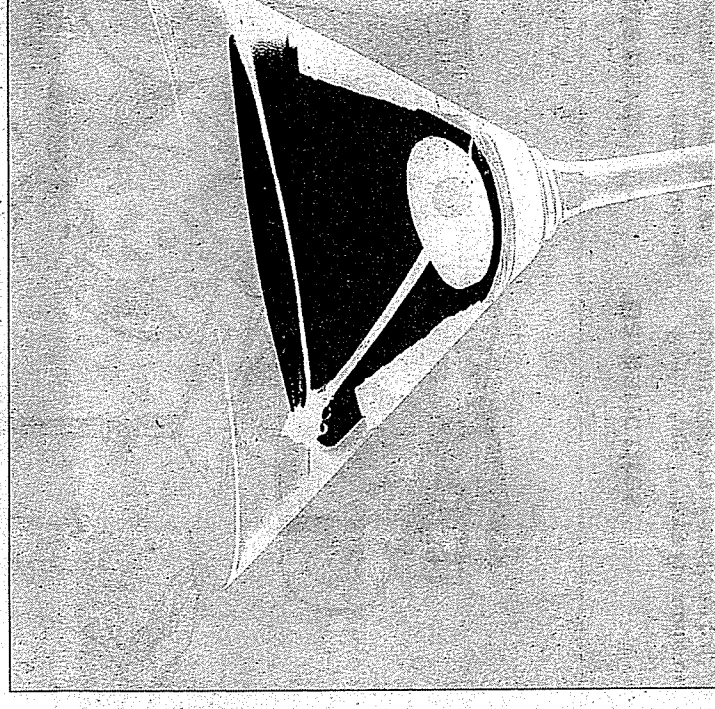
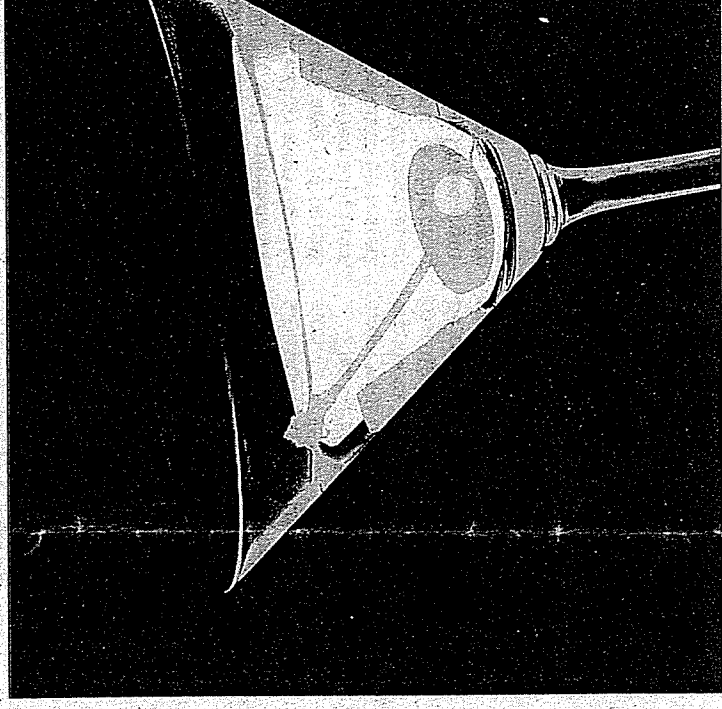
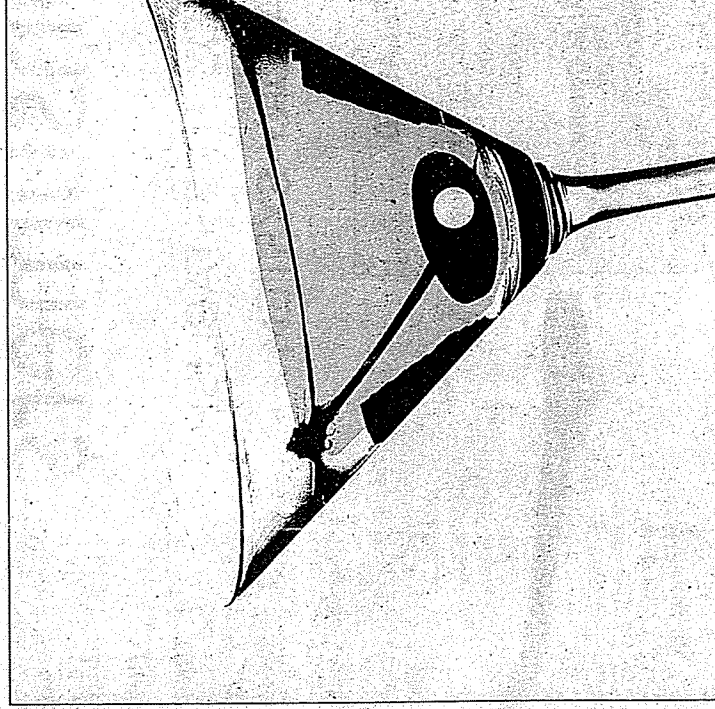
Personality traits such as risk-taking and novelty-seeking tendencies are major conditioning factors in drug addiction. Additionally, because prolonged exposure to abused drugs results in long-lasting changes in the brain, addiction should be considered a chronic medical illness.

There are no specific rules for current generic treatment of drug addiction. More research needs to be conducted to understand the best way to match treatment to individual addictive traits and gear treatment to a more individualistic approach.

The article makes a strong point that, while one treatment model might work best for one subject, it may not have positive results for another. And yes, current efforts at drug prevention sometimes are misguided to the extent that they focus on symptoms, rather than on the psychological syndrome underlying drug abuse.

No matter how highly regarded a treatment program is or how luxurious or barebones the facilities are, the bottom line is that the addict has to commit to recovery in order for recovery to begin.

-NARINO E. CARBONELL, South Miami



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