



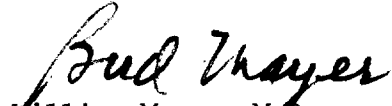
Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and
Mental Health Administration
Office of the Administrator
Rockville MD 20857

JAN 11 1982

NOTE TO DR. KOOP

Subject: Letter from The Heritage Education and Review
Organization

Attached is background information you requested on the
game "Dungeons and Dragons." I hope this information
will be helpful, and if additional information is needed
please let me know.


William Mayer, M.D.
Administrator

Attachment

The following comments are addressed to the issues posed in the letter of December 4 from Mrs. Penny Bowan to Dr. Koop. The questions concern the potential hazards inherent in the currently popular game "Dungeons and Dragons."

- Dungeons and Dragons is a fantasy game for children, primarily for pre-teens and teenagers. The game requires at least two players. One player is always the Dungeon Master. The Dungeon Master conducts the game, informing other players of their progress on a particular road to adventure and what threats, treasures, and/or choices are available to them. Players can choose to be one of a number of characters--for example, an Elf, a Magic User, a Cleric, a Humanoid, etc., and they have various characteristics, resources (money, weapons, powers), and points of vulnerability ("hit points"). Various monsters, demons, fiends, and other "bad guys" can appear in a game to thwart an adventure. The general aim of the game is to make the right choices and find the treasure that is hidden away, or rescue those hidden away in dungeons by the powers of evil. Played in its intended fashion, Dungeons and Dragons is not likely to place the participants at any psychological risk.

- It is generally agreed that the fantasies and role taking involved in children's play are among the richest experiences in early development. They are a child's way of testing body and mind, of trying out roles, and learning about things, people, skills, and concepts. Play is also a valuable vehicle for learning to express and modulate emotions like joy, frustration, anger and pride. Children seek opportunities to act out their anger through stories, pictures, toys, clay--and games like Dungeons and Dragons. Normal children, therefore, are not likely to experience psychological damage from the techniques involved in this or comparable games.

- Certainly our tax money should not be used to promote this or any other game. It is questionable, however, whether the government has a role in limiting the production of children's games or the normal and legitimate uses to which they are put.

Prepared by: Julius Segal
DSPI:NIMH
December 29, 1981