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Pacific Information Service on Street-Drugs January 1972

School of Pharmacy

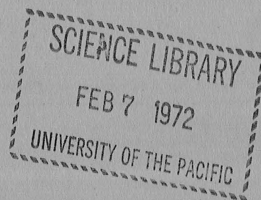
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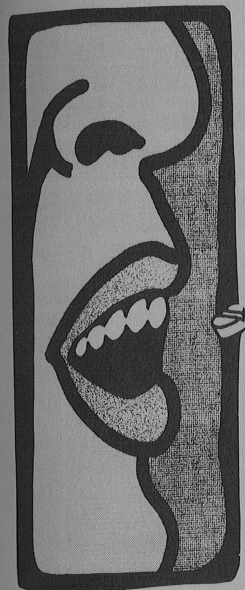
on

Street-Drugs

Sponsored by:

Beta Omega Chapter

Rho Chi



Editors: John K. Brown, Ph. D.
Associate Professor of Pharmacognosy

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Professor of Pharmacology

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY
University of the Pacific
Stockton, California 95204

Bulletin No. 2
January, 1972

Some Names - Addresses - Phone Numbers

Friends Incorporated
1420 N. California Street
Stockton, California 95201
Director: Lou Hardy

Phones:
Business (209) 464-4050
Crisis (209) 464-7086

In Site of Tuolumne County Incorporated
P. O. Box 531
Sonora, California 95370
Director: Verna Nosker
Asst. Director: Richard Davis
Counselor-Aide: David Asia

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Business (209) 532-5555
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Merced, California 95340
Director: John "Mike" Gallagher

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Manteca House
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Manteca, California 95336
Director: Elaine Gregory

Phone: (209) 823-1911

Straight Drug Talk (S.D.T.)
Student Chapter, American Pharmaceutical Association
School of Pharmacy, University of the Pacific
Stockton, California 95204
Director: Arthur Whitney

Phone: (209) 478-2797

The students will go into schools and meet with small groups of students to discuss the various aspects of the non-medical (and medical) use of drugs.

Do It Now Foundation
6136 Carlos Avenue
Hollywood, California 90028
Director: Victor Pawlak

Phone: (213) 463-6851

This group does street-drug analyses and have started to publish their results in the Los Angeles Free Press.

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LSD - and the market place

Our laboratory and others have not found strychnine as a contaminant of street-drugs, but reports of "strychnine" poisoning persist. This report will review some of the history of LSD and indicate a solution to this mystery.

LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) is a semisynthetic hallucinogen manufactured from chemicals isolated from a fungus (Claviceps purpurea) that grows as a parasite on rye. Closely related lysergic acid amide is found naturally in the seeds of the common "heavenly blue" morning glory (Ipomea violacea) and also in another rather rare member of the same family (Convolvulaceae) known as Ololiuqui (Rivea corymbosa). It should be noted here that the eating of commercially processed seeds is not recommended since all such seeds are treated with a variety of toxic fungicides and pesticides to prevent spoilage.

In 1938, A. Stoll and A. Hofmann of Sandoz Research Laboratories in Switzerland synthesized LSD (1) starting with alkaloids isolated from the rye fungus (commonly called ergot). Hofmann discovered its hallucinogenic properties by accidental ingestion on April 16, 1943. He lapsed "into a kind of drunkenness which was not unpleasant and which was characterized by extreme activity of imagination" -- the first good trip. Not knowing the dosage he had accidentally taken, he decided to repeat the experiment and took what he thought would be a very safe dosage (250 micrograms). Soon he was "shouting half insanelly and babbling" -- the first bad trip. He later found that he had taken 10 times the effective psychedelic dosage. Providing that the LSD is pure, an effective psychedelic dose is 20-30 micrograms orally (2). Classical schizophrenia-like symptoms begin to appear when the dosage exceeds 30 micrograms (3). With doses of 400-500 micrograms there is definite increase in blood pressure, profuse salivation, lacrimation, sweating, a marked increase in pupil size, an exaggeration of reflexes, total disorientation and marked tremors of arms and legs (4). These symptoms resemble the classic textbook descriptions of subconvulsive doses of strychnine. The first notice that a person under LSD intoxication could be a danger to himself and to others was published in England in 1955 (5). The first to report the strychnine-like effect of LSD on spinal reflexes was Weidman in 1957 (6) and this has been confirmed in many species -- even in the elephant (7).

A word about dosage is in order, a level teaspoonful of table salt weighs about 4.8 grams. This amount is equal to 4,800 milligrams and 4,800,000 micrograms. Weight-wise a teaspoonful of table salt is equivalent to 192,000 psychedelic doses

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Table I A Sampling Of "Bummer" Trips Found To Contain LSD

Description	Source	Estimated LSD Content in Micrograms (11)	Estimated Factor of Overdosage	Other Notes
Orange tablet triturate*	University of Maryland Import	500	20X	Big Bad Trip
Purple powder**	Sonora, CA	400	16X	Hospitalized strychnine psg.
Gelatin flake (Windpane LSD)	Stockton, CA	400	16X	Bad Trip
Purple tablet triturate	Stockton, CA	200	8X	"Bummer"
Orange powder in gum wrapper	Stockton, CA	100	4X	Also had amounts of PCP
Purple tablet triturate	Fairfield, CA	100	4X	Bad Trip
Blue tablet triturate	Stockton, CA	75	3X	Bad Trip
Pink tablet triturate	Stockton, CA	75	3X	Bad Trip
Elongated orange tablet	Stockton, CA	75	3X	Bad Trip

* A tablet triturate is a small round tablet made with lactose that one can usually crush between the finger and thumb.

** This powder was totally free of strychnine when analyzed.

of LSD (assuming the psychedelic dose to be 25 micrograms). A safe psychedelic dose is a micro amount requiring considerable sophistication to package into a safe tablet or capsule.

Certain street-drugs are legitimate drugs made by legitimate manufacturers and diverted into street commerce without tampering with the formulation (amphetamines, barbiturates). Dosages of these agents are quite consistent. Such is not the case with LSD, since it is usually made by amateur chemists and packaged by even more amateur pharmacists. In our laboratory, (see Table 1) we have found that the dosage of LSD in a tablet or capsule may vary from nothing to 500 micrograms. This inconsistency in dosage plays a major role in the quality of the trip since levels of 20-30 micrograms will be consistently safe, levels of 70-100 micrograms will be unpredictable, and levels of 300 micrograms and above will be consistently bad. High doses of LSD can easily be mistaken for beginning strychnine poisoning (8).

Quite often the manufacturers of LSD are users and tolerant to LSD, hence they manufacture dosages that are effective for them -- blissfully ignorant that the same dosage will be a gross overdosage for an individual that has not taken such drugs regularly. The first notice that LSD causes tolerance was noted by Isbell and co-workers at the Lexington Hospital (9) and has been repeatedly confirmed by others. Significant tolerance can be seen within 4 days of routine dosage. Chlorpromazine (Thorazine) is the best antidote for overdosage with LSD, and its use was first recommended in 1955 (10). However, it will not antidote all of the psychedelics, and severe drug interactions have resulted when chlorpromazine was used to treat LSD poisoning that turned out not to be LSD but PCP (phenylcyclidine) or one of the scopolamine-like drugs. It should be emphasized that the FDA does not guarantee the quality of street-drugs.

To date there is no scientific evidence that anyone taking LSD is more intelligent, more perceptive, more intuitive, or more artistic while under the influence of the drug; however, there is considerable evidence (scientific and otherwise) that they feel that way.

Generally, the word has gotten around among users of street-drugs that street quality LSD is unpredictable and that the chances for bad trips are high even when "conditions" are good (LSD should never be taken when a person is under stress or anxiety). Therefore, users prefer to buy "mescaline". While the dosage of pure mescaline is rather high (300 mg.), mescaline has an effective fail-safe mechanism to prevent overdosage. If one takes much above the psychedelic dosage,

there is vomiting which removes any unabsorbed drug from the stomach. Pure LSD does not have this emetic effect, so it is easy to take 100 times overdose without vomiting.

While users want mescaline, mescaline is just not found being sold in the street (12). This situation is found uniformly throughout the USA and in Europe and is due pretty much to economics. LSD is relatively easy to make if one starts with certain of the expensive ergot alkaloids (a semi-synthetic process). Mescaline is somewhat more difficult to make, but the starting materials are relatively cheap. However, one level teaspoonful of mescaline (assume that it weighs equivalent to table salt) represents 16 safe doses while the same weight of LSD represents 192,000 safe doses if formulated properly. Assuming that each dose could be sold for a minimum of 50¢ (cheap), the teaspoonful of mescaline could sell for \$8.00 as contrasted to \$96,000.00 for the same amount of LSD. Once you deduct the cost of the starting material, the mescaline manufacturer is losing money even if he sells direct. The LSD manufacturer however, makes real money and is a businessman first and foremost. Altruism has never been a characteristic of street-drug manufacturers or peddlers.

Marvin H. Malone
January 28, 1972

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News & Comment

Recently we have become aware of two new sources of information concerning the composition of street-drugs. The Los Angeles Free Press now publishes a weekly column, Dope Scoreboard, which gives the current status of the street market in the Los Angeles area. PharmChem Laboratories of Palo Alto have started to publish a monthly newsletter which reflects the condition of the San Francisco and Bay Area marketplace. PharmChem will send their newsletter to interested individuals and organizations, apparently without charge.

These publications primarily reflect the status of the west coast street market and the materials currently available in these areas but we would suspect that much of this material is not restricted to this market alone. Consequently this information should be useful in other areas of the country.

Los Angeles Free Press
6013 Hollywood Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90028
(Published weekly - \$8.00 for 52 issues)

PharmChem Laboratories Contact:
1848 Bay Road L. J. Goldman, Ph. D.
Palo Alto, California 94303 Vice President

The Do It Now Foundation of Hollywood has reported some results of their street-drug monitoring program in the Los Angeles Free Press (vol. 8 (51), Dec. 10, 1971). They wrote the following about mescaline:

"Mescaline: Another great hoax being perpetrated is that there is real mescaline in town. This is nothing but wishful thinking. A comparison of over fifty samples indicates that if you buy mescaline in capsules, you will probably get LSD. If you buy mescaline in tablet, you will probably get a combination of LSD and PCP."

Jim Anthony at the College of Pharmacy, University of Minnesota has made a suggestion that seems worthy of further consideration. He suggested that the various analysis services pool their information and publish a single bulletin. We are planning on presenting our program and some of the results at the APHA meeting in Houston (April 22-25, 1972). Maybe at this time interested groups could meet and see what could be done. I suggested to Jim that he be the co-ordinator. If interested drop a note to - Jim Anthony, Community Program Assistant, College of Pharmacy, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455.