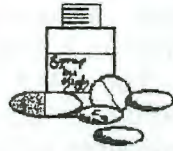


Pills-a-go-go

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In this issue:

- Ritalin for horses
- Animal-made pills
- Pill-counting computer

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Prozac Corner

We might as well break down and start devoting a regular feature to Prozac.

The latest is a \$150 million lawsuit brought by Bonnie Leitsch of Louisville, KY who claims the drug caused her to attempt suicide. Ms. Leitsch, who is also National Director of Prozac Survivors Support Group, showed up on Geraldo to warble her tale of woe citing the fact that she sassed her husband as obvious proof that the drug had driven her insane. She then said she tried to commit suicide by taking a large amount of "arthritis medicine" (an NSAID perhaps?) then downing an overdose of Flexeril. She recounted how she then sat down and waited to die, feeling "the life drain out of my hands".

Although neither one of these drugs put her in much danger of anything but a dry mouth she claims it was a Prozac-induced suicide attempt and that these suicidal feelings stopped "the minute she came off of it" (even though the half-life of Prozac is about a month). Lilly lawyers hasten to point out that Ms. Leitsch has been treated for depression since 1976 and had already attempted suicide in 1960.

Lilly stock then dropped more than three bucks when the FDA set a Sept. 20 advisory committee hearing to listen to more claims that Prozac turns you into a werewolf.

But at least the cops busted four guys in Hammond, Indiana who had stolen \$20 million in various goods, including a truckload of Lilly pharmaceuticals worth \$1.2 million.

Pill Pharming

Researchers in Britain, the United States and the Netherlands have come up with what has got to be the coolest way to make pills yet. Using genetically altered goats and other farm animals, the docs are extracting the clot-dissolving agent TPA from the animal's milk. They say the method (which so far hasn't worked on cows — their real target) can produce loads of otherwise expensive, protein-based drugs cheaply and naturally. (continued)

Smart Pills

By Charles Waggoner, SPP

The resurgence of interest in pill-increased mental capacity has gotten something of a lift lately from the publication of "Smart Pills". But this better-living-through-chemistry approach is not new. Many of the pills being talked about have been around for years — Hydergine®, for example, was first proposed years ago as an aid to memory and a shield against liver damage in Dirk Pearson's Life Extension. Those interested in increasing their brain power would do well to look up this classic for some of the basics on body & brain chemistry.

One pill not getting as much attention as it deserves is the amino acid phenylalanine. PAGG tests have shown that 500 mgs on an empty stomach before sleep or in the a.m. can dramatically improve short-term memory and elevate mood. The benefits, unfortunately, seem to wear off in a few weeks and there is some indication that it may even cause a bounce-back loss of memory.

This is important to keep in mind while going down this road. Be careful. As "brain food", sucrose is one of the best substances around since it passes so quickly to the brain. Caffeine, too is a smart drug, but there are consequences. After all methamphetamine can be almost miraculous in stimulating brain activity yet quite devastating if used improperly. Fasten your seat belts!

Other researchers are making a drug called BC-PS (bovine cortex phosphatidylserine) derived from cow brains to help restore memory lost through aging. It is already in use for this purpose in Europe.

Halcion Hassles

Newsweek put it on their cover, only about three years after California magazine did the same thing. Yes, Halcion can provoke psychotic episodes if used in high doses over long periods of time. And, yes, an overdose can be fatal. Look for this to be the new Devil Drug. Pilluminatti know that Halcion (triazolam) is a cool-o benzodiazapine sleeping pill that, with a four hour half life, leaves no "hangover". Perfect for eliminating jet lag.

Dahmer's pills

Thanks to the New York Times paying a janitor \$200 to steal documents from the prosecutor's desk (the NYT denies this) we now know that Dahmer used Halcion to knock out a 13-year-old boy in 1988. Traces of unspecified benzodiazapines were found in two of the corpses recovered from the notorious apartment along with an unfilled prescription for lorazepam (another benzodiazapine). Halcion and alcohol seem like a great combo for rendering someone unconscious. Not lorazepam.

More Pill Poisoning

Word has leaked out about an extortion plot against Colgate-Palmolive in Australia. Some maniacs had poisoned products ranging from toothpaste to dishwashing liquid with cyanide. Although nobody has died and officials insist there is no danger, they are recommending the recall of all the products.

Big Brother and Your Rx

Oklahoma has become the first state to totally computerize all prescriptions so that they can be constantly monitored and compared by type of drug and the person buying it. A huge computer at the Argus Health Systems company in Kansas City, MO sounds the alarm if someone, in the computer's judgement, seems to be filling too many prescriptions, doing it at too many different pharmacies or anything else that it deems suspicious. Then the feds are promptly alerted and suspects arrested. So far there are some 20 people being tried for improper prescription drug use on the computer's say-so. More are on the way as other states clamor to sign up with the new program.

Currently nine other states (CA, HI, ID, IL, IN, MI, NY, RI, and TX) require paper copies of all prescriptions to be assembled for the purpose of monitoring what doctors are pre-

scribing to their patients.

Defending themselves, the snoops say they're only after "hard drugs" and promise not to interfere with a doctor's ability to prescribe medicines nor a patient's ability to use them. Still, the AMA opposes the new system since it is usurping their power.

The AMA is also worried about a new FDA policy to "get tough" on drugs prescribed for unapproved uses. At least 400 million of the 1.6 billion prescriptions written by U.S. doctors every year are for treatments that lack FDA approval. So far, this is perfectly legal as not all companies can afford the expensive process for getting FDA approval for every "claim" a drug can make. Aspirin, for instance, is widely used as a blood thinner although the FDA has never approved it for that purpose. The FDA plans to crack down on companies that mention unapproved uses for their drugs.

Notes

- The FDA has approved Rogaine (minoxidil) for use on the 20 million women who experience hair loss. Before it was only for men. Before that it was only approved as a heart medication.
- A man in Oshkosh, WI was nearly killed by cyanide found in his supply of "Spanish Fly" purchased from Pleasure Products, Box 597-379, Sherman Oaks, CA. Spanish Fly (cantharides) is made from dried green blister beetles of southern Europe, is said to be an aphrodisiac and it is illegal.
- The FDA has banned 111 ingredients from alcohol to yeast from being listed as "active" in OTC diet concoctions. Most are nutrients or binders.
- A group has opened up a 900 # that generates letters to the California Assembly and Senate urging Bush and CA to rescind ban on the "abortion pill" — RU486. # is 900-73RU486, costs \$5.95 per call.
- A man in Bandera, Texas was nailed for doping his race horses with Ritalin.
- Birth control pill use is back up to its highest level since 1975. 16.3 million women (28% of all women between the ages of 15 and 44) are currently on the pill.
- A Swedish firm, Kabi Pharmacia AB, is dealing with U.S. drug Co. Warner-Lambert for its nicotine patch. The patch releases nicotine through the skin over a 16 hour period, helping reduce the cravings brought on by quitting smoking.
- Get a free PDR by calling up doctors' offices and just asking if you can have last year's — say you're a student.
- The latest issue of Dick Yourself (\$2 PO Box 1001 Athens, OH 45701) contains a recipe for making plastic explosives from aspirin (another non-FDA approved use).
- Word is that Abbott Laboratories are working on a drug that mimics caffeine to enhance cognition in the elderly.
- Barbiturates aren't the only pills that can kill you (cf. Final Exit et al.). A woman in Puyallup, WA killed herself with an OD of verapamil (blood pressure medication), which shut down her heart. Bush's arrhythmia medication, procainamide can also be quite fatal.