

Pills-a-go-go

Journal of Pills
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#7

pills capsules syrups powders extracts tinctures elixers tablets effervescent tablets time released enteric coat

Pills in Court

Manhattan federal judge Miriam Cedarbaum had to break it up as two double-named pill makers duked it out over their respective allergy pills.

After Warner-Lambert's Chlor-Trimeton ran commercials suggesting that Schering-Plough's Benedryl would make you so drowsy you'd fall asleep at a boxing match, Schering-Plough yanked their nemesis into court to shut them down. The judge agreed with S-P that the ads were misleading, noting that both medications would make you drowsy.

Prozac Corner

Only a couple of people have blamed Prozac for their behavior lately. One was a woman in San Jose who strangled her mom to death with a Venetian blind after she "laughed in her face". She's facing 4-11 years for voluntary manslaughter.

Up the road in San Francisco a 61-year-old woman is in hot water for trying to eat her mom's face off. Bite size chunks of flesh were missing from the 87-year-old lady's face and cops say they found uneaten chunks of human flesh around the place.

Halcion Hassles

The European Community is planning to decide sometime in December whether to ban Halcion in all 12 of its member countries. The oval pill is already outlawed in the UK, Finland and Norway. France, Germany, Italy and Australia have restricted it to small doses only.

Meanwhile investigators found that Marjorie Wantz, who took her life with Jack Kevorkian's "suicide machine" in October, had twice attempted to kill herself by swallowing at least 120 hits of Halcion ... but no dice. She turned to other means when she found out it would take at least 4,000 mgs to off her.

Halcion's makers, Upjohn, announced it would begin providing the sleeping pill in bubble packs of ten hits along with a circular about drugs in general to call attention the misuse of any drug. Upjohn has further offered to indemnify any doctor against lawsuits arising from their prescription of Halcion

This is the same deal Lilly has offered to any doctor prescribing Prozac and it seems to be becoming something of a trend.

Collagen Corp. of San Francisco has offered a similar deal to protect dermatologists who prescribe their acne and wrinkle meds, Zyderm and Zypplast. On the other hand, big deal, only 13 people have sued Collagen over the last ten years and the drug maker has won 10 of those, paid off one and two are pending.

New Research

Eli Lilly has invested \$4 million in Sphinx Pharmaceuticals of Durham, N.C. in a 4-year agreement to jointly develop what are known as "lipid second messengers". These compounds are thought to regulate functions within the cell and it is hoped that the studies will yield medicines for arthritis, heart disease, and central nervous system disorders.

The aesthetics of pills

by Chet Antonini
Editor and Publisher

What a bumper crop of pill news since the last issue! It pushed all my well-laid plans right onto the back burner! I had planned to devote much of this issue to a more free-form discussion of the pill in our society and its influence on our culture but I just don't have room. PaGG may be at something of a crossroads and I guess we'll have to strike some kind of balance between hard news and discussions of the larger pill picture.

Pills made it into the mainstream lately as they've found another "miracle" use for aspirin (to prevent colon cancer) and sales of Final Exit topped 500,000. By the way, the book is excellent both in style and substance. I recommend it even though I haven't had a chance to formally review it here. It's worth the money if just for the chart showing fatal doses of 18 different drugs along with tips on how to potentiate their effects.

By way of explanation, number 6's "double issue" format was an experiment I don't think I'll repeat soon but you never know ... as I said we're at a crossroads.

For the next issue I plan to have a pill coating taste test so if you have any favorites be sure to drop me a line and describe its bouquet and "swallow".

HEROIN.

(B) 1898

In fact write in about whatever the hell you want. I have been very encouraged by the response I've been getting lately.



(C) 1895

continued on back

Iterex and Miles are also planning to team up to use Iterex's proprietary peptide screening methods to develop a class of drugs that play key roles in physiological functions such as blood pressure, fertility, mood, pain relief, and inflammation.

Hot New Drugs

The latest drug to hit the street scene is a veterinary sedative/anesthetic called Ketamine. Obtained in liquid form and reduced to a powder, dealers charge about \$20 a dose for the stuff, calling it "Special K". They say Special K causes pleasant disorientation and hallucinations for several hours. The DEA is now thinking up ways to tighten controls over it.

Pfizer got the FDA to approve its Prozac clone, sertraline and the pill should be on the market by the end of the year under the name, Zoloft.

Warner Lambert has utilized Orphan Drug laws to make profitable the marketing of pentostatin (Nipent) used to treat a rare form of hairy cell leukemia.

Penicillin-resistant gonorrhea now has an enemy in pill form. Just one 400 mg. hit of Lederle's cefixime (Suprax) kills off the infection as well as a 250 mg injection of ceftriaxone — the only other way to off such strong clap.

Merck Sharp & Dohme has a new pill, Proscar, that cures prostatitis, which afflicts 80% of all men at one time or another.

Dan Quaalude

First it said it didn't exist, now the government admits the DEA docs have a file on the vice president. It includes the accusation by Charles Parker on August 19 1982 that dealer Terry C. Carson sold 'ludes to the boy politician. Carson said Dan liked to use the pills "to unwind on the weekend".

Kennedy Rape Pills

Defense attorneys for accused rapist William Smith are going to try to use pills to explain away what happened. Lawyers for the mega-rich family tipped their hats when they questioned a prospective juror who said she was a nurse about some of the effects of anti-inflammatory drugs PATTY BOWMAN was taking for a back injury. The nurse said she thought these drugs would make a person bruise more easily.

Oh. So the numerous bruises — including the imprint of five fingers on one arm — came because of a pill, not assault.

Bay City Connection

Mayor Mary L. Donnelly, 39, pleaded guilty to felony drug dealing after 21 months of selling illicit — ulcer medication.

Donnelly, who finished her term as mayor of Bay City, MI admitted she sold and offered for sale quantities of Zantac 150 she "obtained" while working for the pill's maker, Glaxo.

Anonymous Pills

Janet Polivka, 50, took her own life on the banks of the river where her daughter Kerri Jo died at the age of 12. Marshall Co. WV medical examiner Dr. Norman Wood said it was an overdose of pills. "She emptied her bottles", the doc told reporters.

In Ohio 74-year-old Walter Pleszewicz, who had bladder cancer, read Final Exit then killed himself with "prescription pills."

Milli Vanilli singer Rob Pilatus supposedly tried to do himself in by taking one or more anti-depressant pills.

Burroughs Bonanza

Burroughs-Wellcome, makers of AZT have come up with another drug to fight AIDS. Known so far as 566C80, the stuff can relieve pneumocystis carinii pneumonia common to AIDS patients. The stuff was originally designed to fight malaria.

Doctors interested in getting the drug for their patients should

call 1-800-755-2020.

B-W's anti-herpes pill, Zovirax, has also been found to help kids with chicken pox, healing them a day or so faster and with less fever, itchiness, and fewer pox.

Generic Crime

Bolar Inc. is involved in a \$3.8 million class action suit for faking FDA tests for its anti hypertensive generic Dyazide and its antibiotic Macrochantin (used for urinary tract infections). The firm has admitted to no wrong-doing but it set up a fund to settle the lawsuit. Anybody who used either of these drugs between August 21, 1987 and December 12, 1990 has a crack at the cash.

Former Bolar CEO Robert Schulman is looking at 5 years and \$250,000 fine for each of five counts of defrauding the FDA. The nice man pleaded guilty in March and agreed to pay \$10 million for selling \$192 million of adulterated and mislabeled generics. Bolar had apparently gotten a little excited over the FDA's latest first-come first-served policy for generics and filed 67 applications without pills nor even formulas for them.

Streamlining the FDA

The FDA plans to significantly improve its approval process for the first time in 30 years. Part of the plan is to start farming out part of the approval to private companies and to "fast-track" drugs designed for life-threatening diseases. It also plans to begin accepting data from overseas, mostly from western Europe and Japan.

It will further cut the time needed to evaluate common drugs such as allergy medications, analgesics, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and antibiotics. Currently these drugs make up about one third of all the drugs sold. The new procedures should free up the FDA for more important things and slash 3-4 years off the decade-long approval process now in use. It would also speed final FDA review from 30 to just six months.

Notes

After executing at least 88 people and burning tons of drugs in stadiums filled with cheering spectators, Chinese authorities announced they had also discovered some of their own drug factories had been coaxed into making amphetamines by Taiwanese firms claiming to be making asthma drugs and cough syrup. ° A couple of overseas studies have shown that no more than 30-75 mgs of aspirin is needed on a daily basis to help prevent heart attacks. A normal aspirin is 325 mgs. ° Memphis Jaycees apologized to officials from the Elvis estate for including an anti-drug room in their haunted house this year. The room featured an Elvis impersonator lying in a coffin saying "Thankya verah much".

The room also contained a toilet and was littered with pill bottles. The Jaycees removed the toilet and pill bottles. ° Eli Lilly has funded a "Chemobile" to cruise central Indiana promoting chemistry to high school kids. Inside the chemobile is an experiment utilizing liquid chromatography to analyze aspirin. ° Rep Jim Nussle (R-IA) revealed that congressmen also get free pills from the capitol physician. ° London animal rights activists caused SmithKline Beecham to remove 2 million bottles of its popular soft drink Lucozade in response to their threats to poison the stuff in retaliation for SKB's testing on animals.

It's true

"Some people might wonder why they would turn to their physician when, to put it bluntly, you can just go out and buy a gun and blow your brains out. There's something about pills that feels cleaner and more considerate of the family."

— an anonymous doctor who favors physician assisted suicide, quoted in an AP story.