

1996-2007, Optometrists Network

DEA REPORT

ADD/ADHD Statement of Drug Enforcement Administration

At the conclusion of the Conference on Stimulant Use in the Treatment of ADHD

(ADD/ADHD, AD(H)D, ADD-ADHD, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Attention Deficits, Attention Deficit Disorders, Hyperactivity)

San Antonio, Dec. 10-12, 1996

Ritalin -- "potent, addictive and abusable"

"Today, we have concluded a national conference of experts from the fields of research, medicine, public health and law enforcement brought together by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to examine issues concerning the prescribing of stimulants to school-age children for the treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, ADHD (ADD/ADHD, attention deficit hyperactive disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). The principal drug used for this purpose is methylphenidate, commonly known as "Ritalin."

The DEA has become alarmed by the tremendous increase in the prescribing of these drugs in recent years. Since 1990, prescriptions for methylphenidate have increased by 500 percent, while prescriptions for amphetamine for the same purpose have increased 400 percent. Now we see a situation in which from seven to ten percent of the nation's boys are on these drugs at some point as well as a rising percentage of girls. When so many children are involved in the daily use of such a powerful psychoactive drugs, it is important for all of us to understand what is going on and why. The DEA has a responsibility to the nation to control such abusable legal drugs and to insure that their use is confined to legitimate medical need. Certain things have become clear from our deliberations of the last several days, and the public, parents and decision-makers need to hear them.

Over-prescribed, over-marketed and over-sold.

. . . "quick-fix", bogus medical practice which is producing large profits

First, let me say that medical experts agree that these drugs do help the small percentage of children who need them. But there is also strong evidence that the drugs have been greatly over-prescribed in some parts of the country as a panacea for behavior problems. These drugs have been over-promoted, over-marketed and over-sold, resulting in profits of some \$450 million annually. This constitutes a potential health threat to many children and has also created a new source of drug abuse and illicit traffic. The data shows that there has been a 1,000 percent increase in drug abuse injury reports involving methylphenidate for children in the 10 to 14 age group. This now equals or exceeds reports for the same age group involving cocaine. The reported numbers are still small but experts feel that this is only the "tip of the iceberg."

Ritalin . . . far exceeds any professional estimates of actual need.

". . . as many as 15 to 20% of children have been put on Ritalin."

I do want to emphasize that medical authorities do believe that ADHD (ADD/ADHD, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is a distinct health problem affecting **some** children who can be helped by these drugs when prescribed after careful diagnosis. In those cases, parents should work closely with their children, the family physician and school authorities to insure proper administration and control of the drug. But on the other hand, when we see that in some localities as many as 15 to 20 percent of the children have been put on Ritalin or a similar stimulant, there is good reason to conclude that this is "quick-fix." bogus medical practice which is nevertheless producing large profits. This far exceeds any professional estimates of actual need.

Parents need to understand that we are talking about very potent, addictive and abusable substances; a potency that can help in the right situation but can destroy in the wrong situation. Above all, parents need to educate themselves and protect their children by adopting an attitude of proper parental caution. Regrettably, much of the literature and promotion of the drug in recent years has ignored or understated the potency and abuse potential of methylphenidate and Ritalin. This appears to have misled many physicians into prescribing the drug as a quick-fix for learning and behavior problems.

"The DEA has a responsibility to insure that use is confined to legitimate medical need."

A potential health threat to many children.

I want to emphasize that matters of this kind are vital but cannot be simplified. There is a legitimate place for these drugs, but we have become the only country in the world where children are prescribed such a vast quantity of stimulants that share virtually the same properties as cocaine. We must find a better balance. We must turn down the flow which is rapidly becoming a flood.

In conclusion, I want to call upon the drug industry, the parent support groups, the researchers and medical authorities to get a better, more accurate message out to the public. I want to call upon law enforcement authorities to root out this new illicit traffic before it spreads. And I want to urge parents to educate themselves, protect

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their children and teach them a healthy respect for both the good and evil which drugs can do.

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stimulants.

END QUOTE

Above is a statement by:
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(reproduced verbatim in its entirety)

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