

# What's behind the PILL-POPPING MANIA?

WHY are young people turning on with drugs? What's behind the modern adult pill-popping mania? How can YOU safeguard YOUR CHILDREN from the dangers of DRUGS?

by Leslie A. McCullough and William F. Dankenbring

SOME ten million individuals take pep pills. Twice that many take barbiturates or sleeping pills. Another three million down tranquilizers.

These startling facts are the estimate of John Cashman, author of the book, *The LSD Story*.

Why? What has gone wrong with society?

## Dangerous Drugs

According to Cashman, "The thousand drug manufacturers who handle amphetamines [pep pills] and barbiturates [sleeping pills] crank out *thirteen billion doses a year, enough to supply every man, woman and child in this country with twenty-four doses of sleeping pills and thirty-five doses of pep-up pills.*"

Who takes them? Let Cashman answer: "At least HALF of these pills, capsules and tablets ultimately find their way into the black market every year. . . . At least two million persons use amphetamines, barbiturates and tranquilizers annually without ever seeing a doctor or handling a prescription. They underwrite a \$250,000,000-a-year black market traffic in the drugs" (page 106, emphasis ours).

Abuse of the amphetamines and barbiturates is the most astonishing aspect of the drug scene. Their abuse is rising far faster than other potent drugs. And, in *many* respects, they are the *MOST dangerous* drugs!

Barbiturates themselves account for a steady three thousand deaths a year in the United States. The amphetamines are no less dangerous. Former

Food and Drug Commissioner George P. Larrick declared that the use of these two types of drugs has "contributed to the rising toll of deaths on our highways, juvenile delinquency, violent and bizarre crimes, suicides, and other antisocial behavior" (ibid, p. 107).

The abuse of pep pills and sleeping pills has international implications. Black markets flourish in such places as Japan, Sweden, England, and Canada, as well as the United States.

Some people use *both* — amphetamines to "get going" in the morning, and barbiturates to "slow down" — thus compounding their dangerous effect!

Although heroin addiction is considered the lowest a person can go in dope depravity, the fact is barbiturate addiction is *WORSE* and harder to escape when a person is "hooked." Addicts coming off barbiturates tend to have convulsions, suffer brain damage, damage to reflexes and muscular coordination. And there is an alarming tendency toward violence.

## Why Pill Gulpers?

Never in all history have so many people gulped pills to wake up, or to go to sleep; to relax, or to stay awake; gain weight, or to lose weight; to avoid conception or to help it along.

James L. Goddard, former Commissioner of the FDA, put the problem bluntly: "More and more of us are becoming dependent on drugs, hiding from the realities of life — or using them just for thrills. Drug abuse cannot

be connected only with narcotics users. The alarming rise in the abuse of stimulant, depressant, and hallucinogenic drugs cuts across all strata of society."

Most people who abuse drugs today do so to relieve anxiety. And since society, today, is "pill-oriented," the first thing people think of when they "hurt" is to take a pill!

Housewives, trying to lose weight, sometimes get hooked on amphetamines. Many middle-income people have drinking problems, and use pills to help the hangover. The trouble is, the "cure" is worse than the original problem. A dangerous cycle begins, and many become hooked.

Some drug abusers over 65 years of age take pills to blunt the fear of old age. Many addicted to pills don't even realize it themselves. Some make the rounds of several different doctors to fill their needs with prescription drugs. Often a drug problem initially begins by taking medication for a disease. The prescribed drugs begin to fill an emotional or psychological need. The patient forms a *dependence* on them. The drugs make them "feel good." They make life easier to cope with, for a while.

Kids are certainly not the only ones affected by the abuse of drugs. Frankly, when you analyze the problem, you see that one *MAJOR CAUSE* of drug abuse among the young is the *EXAMPLE SET* by parents!

Oh, of course there are certain differences — but young people actually receive the *pattern of drug abuse* from their pill-popping, amphetamine-

gulping, barbiturate-swallowing PARENTS!

The very FIRST INTRODUCTION most children get to drugs is the home medicine cabinet. "Medicine cabinet roulette" is a drug game played with growing frequency by young children looking for kicks and fun. *Right at home* they often begin using mom's weight pills, diet pills, or dad's tranquilizers, on the sly. Said Ray Bellinger of the Florida State Bureau of Narcotics: "This is a MAJOR SUPPLY of drugs for kids. The majority of those found in high schools come from the family medicine cabinet."

Bellinger warned that young people sometimes drink up to a quart a day of cough syrup just to get a drop of codeine.

### Enter — Big Business!

Martin Gross, in his revealing, documented book, *The Doctors*, asserted "There is no doubt that America is currently involved in a massive, promiscuous ADDICTION to the concept of medication. Having oversold itself on the miracles of pharmacology, it is hypnotically ingesting as much chemical matter as gracious physicians [who, naturally, do not pay the exorbitant bill] will prescribe. *The drug binge* costs the U.S. alone four billion, three hundred million dollars a year for 782,000,353 drugstore prescriptions [four for every person, not including drugs received in the hospital] and an additional one billion eight hundred million dollars sold over the counter in more diluted form" (*The Doctors*, p. 486).

Big business, indeed!

With Madison Avenue advertising techniques, drug companies today bombard the public with drug advertisements, from aspirins to seltzers, from cough medicines to sleep inducers. Television drug ads are as common as daily sunshine — in fact, even more common in some cases.

There are so many brand-name drugs on the market, today, that doctors themselves cannot keep up with the new ones!

The drug business is so enormously lucrative, that as early as 1950 the underworld moved in and began push-

ing counterfeit drugs. During fiscal 1965 Americans spent an average of \$21 per capita for medication. Now we spend over \$30 yearly per person.

### A Pill for Every Problem

There are pills of every description, pills of every color, pills of all different sizes. There are instant-acting pills, delayed-action pills, candy-coated pills and chocolate-covered pills.

But despite millions of tranquilizers, people on the whole are not more tranquil, today. Despite billions of barbiturates, there is no proof people are resting better or staying calmer. Despite billions of amphetamines, people are not more active, more alert, more energetic.

It's all a big hoax. But millions are duped, deceived victims and swallow a pill any time they feel sick, or have a headache, or want to go to sleep. Millions, at the slightest sign of discomfort, gulp pills.

"Relief is just an instant away," blare the ads. When tranquilizers first hit the market, they rose fast on the popularity list. Forty million prescriptions were ground out annually and over FIFTY MILLION Americans found solace by belting five billion tranquilizers a year (Johnson, *The Pill Conspiracy*, p. 22).

Millions have become dependent on these innocuous-sounding pills. Millions feel they cannot function properly without a *chemical curtain* between them and reality. Before they realize it, they find themselves hopelessly dependent on the chemical — virtually HOOKED!

### WHY Do Young People Turn to Drugs?

Escapism is a primary reason millions are turning to drugs. The pressures of the modern world, the fear of "The Bomb," and the desire to get one's kicks while there is still time, influences many youths to try drugs.

Another basic cause is simply curiosity. A desire to find out what it's like. A large number "turn on" for this reason alone.

And of course, the lust for new kicks, thrills, and pleasures — the desire for self-gratification — causes

many more multiple thousands to try marijuana, dangerous drugs, or hallucinogenic drugs.

Another cause for increasing drug abuse is simply REBELLION. Youth in general appear to be alienated against "the Establishment," the war in Vietnam, the military, and everything that their parents represent. They are disgusted with the "rat race" and "keeping up with the Joneses." Therefore they rebel — turn away — and seek new solutions, new ideas, new pleasures, new values. Drugs excite them, and make them feel they are getting away with something.

Another prime cause, of course, we have already mentioned — the pill-popping EXAMPLE of their elders! One pill is no worse than another, they reason. Besides, many teachers, psychologists, and peers tell these young kids that marijuana isn't harmful and drugs won't hurt them.

A large number of young people turn to drugs because in their crowd "it is the thing to do." They are influenced by other kids their age, the so-called "IN" group. They see friends taking drugs, and don't see any immediate harmful effects. So, perhaps on a dare, they try them.

Many youngsters are basically conformists, although they would never admit it. They conform to their *own* crowd, however — not to their parents' crowd.

A few seek an inner "religious" experience through drugs. They want to explore their inner beings, expand their minds, and obtain self-introspection by drugs. The so-called "mind-expanding" drugs, according to their advocates and missionaries, such as Timothy Leary, are said to bring about a true *religious experience* and help a person to know himself, and God. This has led thousands astray into the path of drug abuse, sometimes resulting in *psychoses and paranoia*, but never true spiritual religious awareness!

Boredom is another major reason millions try drugs. They have no driving PURPOSE in life which thrills them, motivates them, inspires them. They feel flat, dull, bored, jaded, tedious. They seek excitement, fun,

glamour — and think drugs are the answer.

Drugs, however, do NOT give purpose to life. They confuse it, distort it, scramble it up.

### How Can You Spot a Drug User?

If you are a parent, you may wonder if your children are taking drugs. Is there a way you can tell?

There are actually few signs by which a person can be certain of recognizing drug addiction. Even if these signs are present, they do not necessarily constitute proof positive.

Nevertheless, here are certain keys to be aware of, in case you have reason to be suspicious:

1. Hypodermic marks, sores, scabs, scar tissue, or marked discolorations, where the addict may "shoot" the drug. The individual, feeling guilty, may attempt to hide them from view. This may be accomplished by wearing long-sleeved clothing consistently.

2. Drowsiness and yawning; general apathy.

3. Discolored whites of eyes; watery eyes (don't confuse symptoms with common cold!).

4. While under the influence, poor reaction to light by pupils of eyes. Either contracted or dilated pupils, depending on the type of drug.

5. Antisocial or abnormal ideas; lessened moral sense. Marked disregard for other persons.

6. Restlessness, abnormal body movements. Minor facial or body spasms.

7. Stomach sensitive to food intake. Either greatly increased appetite or too little desire for food.

8. Extensive use or knowledge of narcotics slang.

9. Evidence of withdrawal symptoms: uneasiness, irritability, yawning, mucus running from nose, severe aches, stomach cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, muscular spasms, constant twitching.

10. Any marked and sudden CHANGE (deterioration) in general bearing and attitude, such as lack of personal hygiene, unkempt hair, lack of concern about studies in school, general indifference and uncommunicativeness.

11. Wrong associations, secretive, suspicious-looking friends and "buddies."

If you are a parent and want to protect your children from the nefarious evils of drug abuse, then you need to be alert at all times. You need to have an active INTEREST in your children. If you have a warm, loving, affectionate HOME LIFE, with family activities and family UNITY, there is much less need to worry or be anxious.

But if YOU are a pill-popper, don't be too surprised if junior becomes a "pill-head" as well! The old adage, "like father, like son," is all too true!

You parents should KNOW where your children are *at all times*, day and night. You need to KNOW always with whom they are associating. Be aware of their interests, their grades in school. Keep up the ties of family togetherness, conversation, and communication. These are strong safeguards against drug abuse. A little parental checking up will do no harm.

Also, you should frankly *discuss* the subject of increasing drug abuse with your children, especially if they are already teen-agers. Don't let them find out about these things at school, on the street, or from other youths. If they do, you can be sure the information they receive will be dangerously warped and full of error! Far too much mythology and too many lies are in circulation concerning drugs and their supposed "good" qualities. You can be sure that your children will not get the "straight scoop" from some local hippie, some "pot head" or "acid-head."

Educate your children IN ADVANCE, so they will know, and KNOW THEY KNOW, and be well aware of the dangers of drug abuse! *Prevention is the real cure.* It is the only 100 percent effective antidote to dope!

### Build a Happy Home

If you want to protect your children from turning to pot, and popping pills, you need to take stock of YOUR *home life*. What does it offer? Is life just one long boring routine without great interests or family projects?

You CAN have an abundant, interesting, HAPPY home if you want to.

But if you don't, don't be too surprised if your children begin looking elsewhere for kicks, fun, entertainment.

In the affluent society, with many boasting backyard swimming pools and barbecues, two cars to a family — it would seem strange that children become *bored* with it all and want something NEW? Yet, they do! Why?

Because they lack the right kind of scintillating CHALLENGE. The right kind of INTEREST.

Ask yourself: Is yours *really* a HAPPY home, with family LOVE, unity, and understanding?

A happy, warm, secure, loving home is the BEST way to safeguard your children's future — the best way to keep your young ones away from the temptations they may encounter among friends at school. But if your home is a broken, shattered, divided home, filled with arguments, hostility, hatreds, rebellion, insults, antagonisms, feuds, then don't count on being able to help your children keep away from drugs. It may seem to them to be the only way of ESCAPE!

DO YOU SPEND TIME *TEACHING THEM*, showing them the dangers of taking pot, LSD, or any of the other drugs?

Above all, WHAT KIND OF EXAMPLE do you set? Are you a pill-gulper yourself? Do you booze it up with alcohol, take diet pills, sleeping pills, or perk-up pills? Don't think your children won't notice it, and emulate you *in their own way* — by abusing drugs!

SEARCH YOURSELF. Examine your home life, your activities, your environment, education, and your own personal EXAMPLE!

If you find out your child has already been taking drugs, you should not blow up in anger and rage. It would do no good.

In such a case, you should investigate your own example, your home life; see where you can improve. You should sit down and have a sincere, frank father-son talk, letting him know that you will NOT condone or permit what he has been doing. But you will help him and stand by him all you can. With love, compassion, and concern, you should strive to help him conquer the

problem by helping him to recapture true, worthwhile, solid, good values in life.

The best answer to the chemical euphoria of drug abuse is to find and to experience the FULLNESS, the depth, the variety and richness of life itself! Then children will not want a tawdry, cheap imitation for the real thing!

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