



DRUG AND AL GET THI

Why do some people use drugs?

Drugs have been part of the human scene since the beginning of man. As early as 5,000 B.C., opium was used in Mesopotamia. The first known brewery operated in Egypt in 3700 B.C. but there is evidence that people used alcohol as far back as the Stone Age. Here are some of the reasons why people use drugs today, provided by the local Addiction Research Foundation office.

MEDICAL: Physicians prescribe drugs to combat infection or pain, to

restore a healthy chemical balance, or to bolster faltering body processes. While prescription drugs have enormous therapeutic value, there is evidence of significant misuse of some of them. Over-prescribing, "doctor shopping" and lack of awareness on the part of the user all contribute to this. In addition, too high a consumption of some non-prescription drugs produce harmful effects on health.

HOSPITALITY AND FRIENDSHIP: Many ceremonies of everyday life, dating back to ancient

times, involve the use of alcohol—the drinking of toasts, wine in religious rituals, the sealing of a bargain. **RELAXATION:** Low amounts of alcohol, marijuana, coffee, and opium make some people more at ease in social situations. Tranquillizers and sedatives given on prescription are sometimes used without medical supervision. **BELONGING:** The desire to belong to a certain group, or to show that one belongs, makes some people use drugs such as alcohol, marijuana, tobacco or solvents.

Just what is a drug problem?

Coffee, tea, alcohol, laxatives, vitamins, heroin, solvents and so on—the list goes on and on. They are all drugs—some more prone to abuse than others, and a few of them illegal under any circumstances, says staff with the local Addiction Research Foundation office.

The word "drug" traditionally means something which a doctor prescribes for the treatment of a disease or a disorder, or something which one can buy for the same purpose in a drugstore without a prescription. A cough remedy, for example, or a laxative. Drugs also include substances such as heroin and morphine, which were originally used medically to relieve pain but which now are also manufactured and sold illegally "on the street" as drugs of pleasure.

Many of the drugs which are most widely used for non-medical reasons, and about which public concern has arisen—such as cannabis and LSD—have no traditionally recognized medical use and are not sold in drugstores.

Scientists also generally classify as drugs many things which we use as part of our normal diet or as accompaniments of accepted social practices—coffee and tea, tobacco, alcohol, and various spices are examples. Other chemicals, which are manufactured for domestic or industrial purposes, are now sometimes also used to induce states of intoxication. These include industrial solvents, cleaning fluids, nail polish remover and model airplane glue.

Any substance which affects the body can be abused. There are two types of drug problems—medical and social.

An individual medical problem arises when a drug causes injury to the physical or mental well-being of the user. This is the sort of problem which is associated with the concept of alcoholism as a disease.

It is also the sort of problem that can arise from misuse of prescribed or non-prescription drugs.

Whenever you buy non-prescription drugs—an anti-acid, vitamins, a laxative, or a cough remedy—read the label carefully, be aware of the ingredients, and follow the package directions.

Some laxatives, for example, if used to excess, may interfere with the normal bowel function and cause serious irritation.

Using many times the recommended doses of vitamins A and D can have serious effects on health, including temporary nervous system disturbances. Excessive use of pain relievers containing ASA or paracetamol can cause serious kidney or liver damage or bleeding of the stomach lining.

Abuse of cough medicines or strong pain relievers containing a narcotic ingredient such as codeine can occasionally lead to dependence.

When a doctor prescribes a drug, make sure you know what it is and what side effects might be expected. Also, whether caution is necessary in combining the drug with other drugs or in performing complex tasks such as driving.

Many drugs interact with other drugs, sometimes in unexpected ways. For example, the effects of alcohol in the body are increased by the simultaneous use of cannabis, any of the barbiturates, tranquillizers, opiates, or some of the cold remedies.

Great caution is necessary when more than one preparation is used at the same time.

Many drugs cross the placenta and can affect an unborn child. The time of highest risk to the developing baby is during the first three months of pregnancy, but all drugs, including non-prescription drugs, tobacco and alcohol, are best avoided throughout pregnancy except on the specific order of a physician.

The other type of drug problem is the social problem. This arises whenever the use of drugs by some members of society puts them in conflict with the rest of society.

This may occur either as a result of violation of existing laws or because the use of the drug creates a clash between the behavior, values and moral standards of the drug users and those of the non-users.

This happens most often with what we call psychoactive or mood-altering drugs—those drugs which are used primarily for their effects on mood, perception and consciousness, regardless of what their normal medical use (if any) might be.

Drug committee work important

A spin-off group of the CHICKEN program, the Drug Abuse Committee of Halton Hills was formed to counsel drug abusers and to prevent drug abuse.

The Drug Abuse Committee originated under the auspices of the Optimist CHICKEN program, but now operates on its own from the Community Services building on Guelph Street.

"Our primary function is treatment, referral and assessment," says Program Consultant Kristin Bulmer. "We provide treatment to young adults or people experiencing difficulty with drug abuse in their lives."

The Drug Abuse Committee is a non-profit organization funded by federal and regional government and local community groups. Its primary concern is the provision of treatment on an out-patient basis to drug abusers and their families.

The Drug Abuse Committee

(DAC) sponsors HYTES (Halton Youth Theatre Ensemble), a support and personal growth group for young adults 15 to 24 years old, specializing in non-traditional expressive therapy (psychodrama, solometry and group therapy). Crisis intervention, individual and family counselling, and referrals to appropriate community resources such as Welfare and Youth Employment Services, are available to all HYTES group members.

Although DAC has only a part-time therapist, results for the 1987-88 treatment year are impressive. Counselling sessions were maintained by 86 clients, most of them under 18 years of age when they began treatment. Of those being treated, 60 per cent had served time for, or been convicted of alcohol or drug-related offences.

Ten of the 86 clients were referred to residential treatment programs, although "at least 15 or more should

have been but were unwilling or unable," according to the DAC.

The Committee receives about 20 calls per week from parents or friends of drug abusers requesting information.

The DAC speaks at various events, including at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, Maplehurst Correctional Institution, Georgetown District High School, Acton High School, the Ashgrove Women's Institute, the Salvation Army and the North Halton Distress Centre.

DAC's drama group HYTES, performed for 10 pre-teen groups including the Just Say No rally in Hamilton, the CHICKEN club kick-off, Bang-O-Rama and various middle school and public school functions. They also held two "drug-and-alcohol-free" rock concerts.

A new HYTES group is forming in October (this month) for the next performing year.

Police try to head off drug problem



It may come as a surprise but Halton Regional Police take drugs with them to parent and community group meetings.

Now don't get the wrong idea. These drugs are samples of "popular" narcotics parents should learn to recognize.

"Parents are taking more of an interest in identifying drugs," said Sgt. Peter Hodgson of the Halton Regional Police, Criminal Investigations Division. Sgt. Hodgson explained that the portable kit taken to show parental groups and local service groups such as the Kiwanis Club, the Rotary Club or the Optimists includes 15 types of illegal drugs, one small bottle of liquor, various narcotic weigh scales, cannabis pipes, a roach clip (for holding the burning remains of a marijuana or hashish cigarette) and rolling papers for cannabis cigarettes.

Samples are stored in small plastic jars that show the substance and its popular form. Included in the

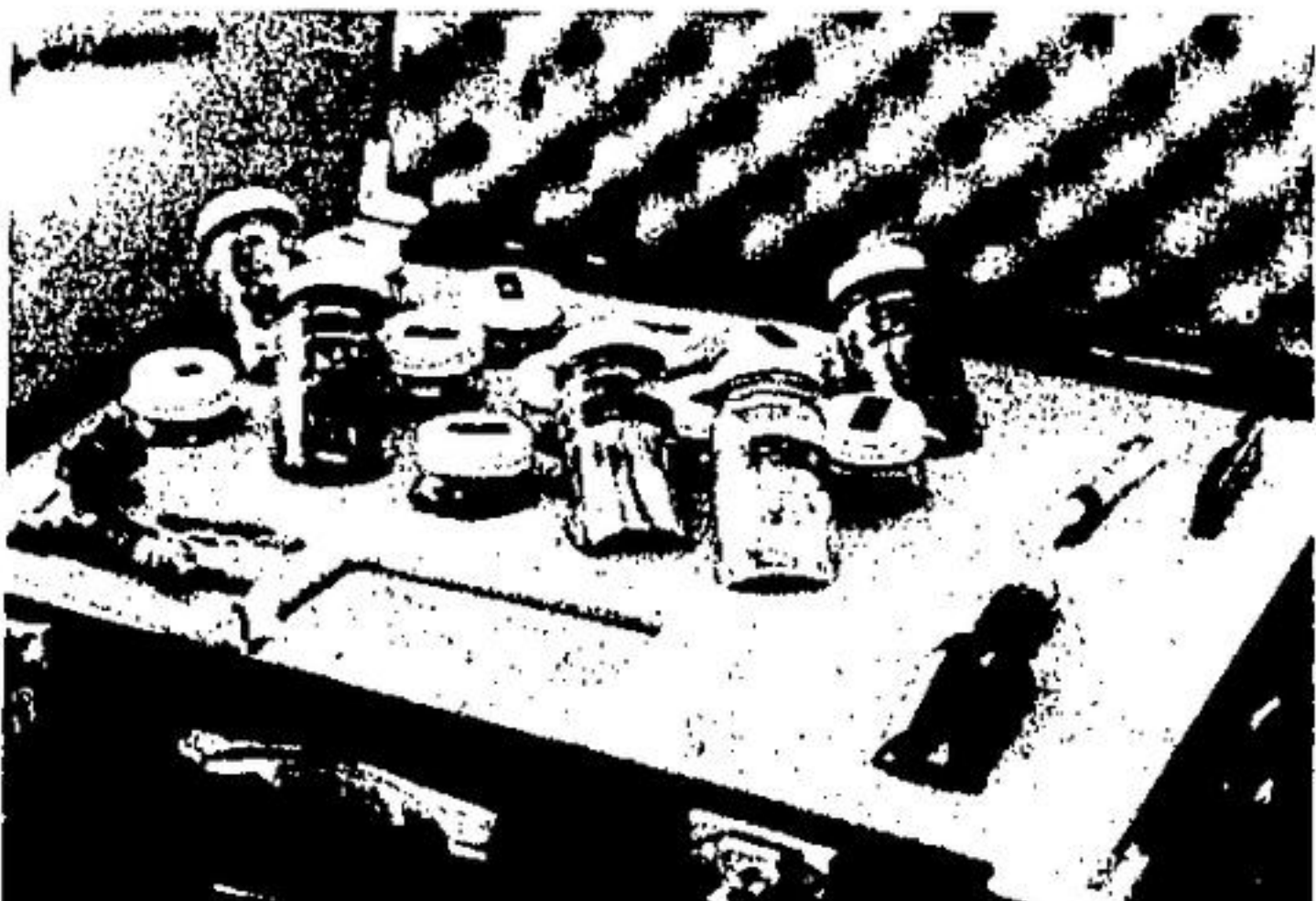
cross-section are marijuana, hashish, hashish oil, marijuana joints (cigarettes), cocaine, Psilocybin (also called "magic mushrooms"), LSD tablets (lysergic acid, an hallucinogenic), LSD in "blotter" form (soaked into paper), speed, heroin, benzadrime (benzies), secenal, dexedrine, nicotine (cigarettes) and loose marijuana.

The idea is to prevent narcotic offences before they happen, through education, said Sgt. Hodgson.

"Our mandate in the drug bureau is first of all drug investigating, including street trafficking," he said, but added that the drug squad is "proactive," meaning they react to an ongoing drug situation.

And Halton Police arrest minor drug offenders, those with narcotics for personal use instead of for the purpose of trafficking, to prevent the dealers from dealing.

"If you dry up the demand, the traffickers have no one to sell to," he said.



This briefcase full of drugs is luggage around to parent and community group meetings by Halton police. The case contains 15 narcotic substances and various narcotic

aids, as well as a small bottle of liquor. The idea is to show parents and potential drug offenders how to identify illegal drugs. (Herald photo)

Facts about tobacco

Both the tobacco plant, *Nicotiana tabacum*, and the plant's most potent ingredient, nicotine, were named in honor of Jean Nicot, French ambassador to Portugal in the 1560s, according to the Addiction Research Foundation.

Nicot was an ardent publicist of the plant's medicinal and other virtues during the decades following the discovery of its use among tribes of North and Central America by early explorers.

Tobacco use is now almost universally condemned as a major cause of ill health. In Canada, the current annual cost of tobacco-related disability exceeds \$1.5 billion, as does the amount collected in taxes on tobacco sales. Savings to the community resulting from the premature deaths of most smokers, and consequent non-collection of retirement and other benefits, have not been calculated.

About \$3.1 billion was spent in Canada during 1977-78 on tobacco products, close to \$483 for each of the 6.2 million smokers. Canadians have one of the highest per capita tobacco consumption rates in the world.

Nearly all of Canada's tobacco is grown in Ontario, where it is the most important cash crop, accounting for more than 25 per cent of the province's total crop value. More than 95 per cent of the crop is made into cigarettes.

Nicotine is an extremely toxic substance. Two or three drops of the pure alkaloid on the tongue will rapidly kill an adult.

The lowest reported fatal dose is about 30 milligrams. A typical cigarette contains 15-20 milligrams of nicotine. As normally smoked, less than 1 milligram from each cigarette reaches the bloodstream and thence the brain.

The actual amount reaching the blood varies considerably, depending, among other things, on whether the cigarette is filtered or not, on the characteristics of the filter, the depth and frequency of inhalation, and the length of the butt.

Police crack down on the drug users

"Cocaine is the drug of the eighties," according to the Halton Regional Police Criminal Investigations Division.

Cocaine, white crystals derived from the coca shrub, has an anaesthetic effect on the user, and is gaining popularity in Halton, says police headquarters CID Sgt. Peter Hodgson.

The drug usually sells for over \$100 a gram, but "the price is coming down and the purity is getting higher," said Sgt. Hodgson. Purity refers to the amount of actual cocaine in a substance sold illegally on the street. Cocaine is "cut" (mixed) with sugar or other substances, explained the sergeant.

"A typical seizure is in the 90 to 98 per cent (purity) range," he said. This compares to the average street purity which is 30 to 35 per cent.

Cocaine, also called "blow, sugar,

coke, and snow" is ingested by the user in different manners. It can be snorted through the nose with a straw-like apparatus, it can be smoked with cannabis or other narcotics, it can be injected with a syringe or it may be "free-based," a process that uses a flammable substance to heat the cocaine.

Cocaine has surfaced on the streets of Halton, but its more lethal counterpart, "crack," is not yet an epidemic.

"There is crack in Toronto, so it will probably be here within a year or so," said Sgt. Hodgson.

But police are cracking down on cocaine offenders. Halton's biggest cocaine bust occurred at the end of July this year when \$850,000 worth of pure cocaine (100 per cent, uncut) was confiscated by the Halton police force in conjunction with the RCMP and the Waterloo regional police force.

Halton Regional Police are cracking down on drug and alcohol abusers. Here Police Constable Ron Hreka demonstrates the breathalyzer system used for suspects who could be impaired.

With both drug and alcohol investigations, testimony and analyzed samples are submitted for inspection before a suspect is convicted on any charges. (Herald photo)

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