

Cites Potential Damage

Researcher Urges More Caution In Using Amphetamines

By Selby Bateman
UNC-G News Bureau
(First of Two Articles)

GREENSBORO—Six-year-old Jimmy starts each school day with a good breakfast, a hug from mom and dad, and a dose of what is commonly called 'speed'—amphetamines.

The daily drug dose, administered by his parents, started shortly after Jimmy reached the first grade. At that time, the excitability, impulsiveness, and overactivity that Jimmy had been exhibiting at home seemed to intensify during the school day.

He couldn't stay in his seat, he would speak out of turn in an overly loud voice, and he simply couldn't concentrate on what the class was studying.

Finally, after consultations among his parents, teacher, school psychologist, and pediatrician, Jimmy began taking a prescribed quantity of

amphetamines every day. The effects were startling: Jimmy paid attention, stayed in his seat, stopped shouting, and actually seemed to concentrate on what was happening in class.

For the first time in several years, Jimmy's parents felt a sense of optimism about their son's behavior. And his teacher heaved a sigh of relief as her classroom returned to normal.

But that's not the end of the story. Although Jimmy and thousands of other so-called hyperactive children across the nation are given those stimulant drugs under medical supervision, some researchers today fear that such therapy may be potentially damaging and, in some cases, unnecessary.

"These stimulant drugs have the effect of speeding up the heart rate, increasing sweat gland activity, and

stimulating brain waves," said Dr. Lynne Y. Koester, an assistant professor of child development at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

"This raises the whole question of how long the children are on the drug and the amounts they are given. And often these children are diagnosed as soon as they hit the public schools," she said.

Dr. Koester, a researcher who has also worked with and taught pre-school, third, seventh, and eighth grade children, is among those researchers who are concerned over this widespread use of stimulant drugs to control hyperactive children. She has presented professional papers before the American Psychological Association on such subjects as psychophysiological characteristics of first graders; sex similarities in children's activity, attention, and arousal; and related re-

search topics. The specter of so many children being given stimulant drugs on a daily basis, often from age six all the way to 10 or 11 years of age, is an unsettling one for researchers such as Dr. Koester.

"In terms of the potential negative side effects there are very few studies and this is one reason I feel we need to be more cautious about the widespread use of the drugs," she commented. "There are all kinds of laws prohibiting the use of amphetamines by adults. It seems to be a double standard."

In some cases, especially where a child has been incorrectly labeled hyperactive, the drug therapy may be an unnecessary solution, she said.

"And I'm afraid that sometimes parents and teachers see this as the only way they can cope with the child's behavior so they may encour-

age the drug's use more than is actually necessary," cautioned Dr. Koester.

"In seeking alternatives, I think we need to look at whether we can provide the stimulation these children need through the environments that they are in rather than through drugs."

Hyperactivity has become a commonly used label applied to many children who exhibit a wide range of behavior problems such as excitability, distractibility, impulsiveness, and overactivity, noted Dr. Koester. And many times, that behavior is first noticed or becomes more noticeable in the school environment, she added.

For years it was assumed that hyperactive children were driven internally, little dynamos of undirected energy sparked by an overactive internal system.

"But what has fairly recently been determined is that the

opposite is, in fact, true," said Dr. Koester. "These children are actually under-aroused internally. They are slower in their physiological processes and they are not as responsive to incoming stimuli."

But, Dr. Koester, who is currently studying the physiological origins of hyperactivity in infants, feels that researchers need to examine more closely both the short and long term effects of such drug therapy.

"We are seeking currently not so much an increase in the numbers of children who are hyperactive, but an increased awareness of the problem," she said. "There is more publicity about it and I think the danger here is that the term gets used very loosely." (In the second and concluding parts of this series, Dr. Koester will discuss guidelines for parents and teachers working with children labeled as hyperactive.)

Margaret Morton, member of the Performing Arts Guild Ensemble, protested the Oct. 17 return to prison of the Charlotte 3. A march calling for their release will be held Dec. 15. (photo by Eileen Hanson).

**December 15
Candlelight March**

Set For Charlotte 3

by Eileen Hanson
Special To The Post
Supporters of the Wilmington 10 and Charlotte 3 will hold a candlelight march in downtown Charlotte on Fri., Dec. 15. The march is scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m. at the Main Library and proceed down Tryon to the square for a rally at NCNB Plaza.

Sponsored by People United for Justice, the march will be a public appeal to Gov. James Hunt to take action on the two cases before Christmas. The human rights organization is calling for pardons of innocence for the 13 civil rights activists. Traditionally the Governor grants pardons before the holiday.

The Wilmington 10 are 9 black men and one white woman convicted in the 1971 fire bombing of a Wilmington grocery store during civil rights protests in the port city. All but the Rev. Ben Chavis have been paroled.

The Charlotte 3 were convicted in the 1968 burning of the Lazy B stable in Charlotte and are currently serving prison sentences of 10-25 years.

The two cases have attracted national and international protest because of perjured testimony used to convict the 13 young people who had been active in civil rights, labor and anti-war activities in the late 1960's. Amnesty International, a human rights organization, designated both groups as "prisoners of conscience."

Last month, the Charlotte City Council adopted a resolution calling on Gov. Hunt to review the cases and commute the sentences of the Charlotte 3.

A year ago the Governor reduced the sentences of the Wilmington 10, making all but Chavis eligible for parole within one year. Supporters of the 10, however, think the defendants were framed and thus are demanding a full pardon of innocence.

Marchers are encouraged to bring signs and a candle to the Dec. 15 rally.

The Wilmington 10 Defense Committee is selling Christmas cards to raise money for their work. Each card has a message from the Rev. Ben Chavis. Cards are \$2.50 for a package of 10, and may be obtained from the Committee at 3234 Banbury Drive in Charlotte, or by calling 393-3321 or 334-2728.

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WBT-radio is making its Fun Bus available to the Social Services Department during the bus strike to help persons in need of food stamp.

The bus will travel to the Civic Center, Social Services and Foodstamps office at the following times:
8:45-9:15 a.m. loading at the Civic Center on the E. Trade St. side.
9:15-9:30 a.m. leave Civic Center—arrive at Foodstamps office.
9:45-10:00 a.m. leave Foodstamps office—arrive at Social Services.
10:30-10:45 a.m. leave Social Services—arrive at Foodstamps office.
11:15-11:30 a.m. leave Foodstamps office—arrive at Civic Center.
12:15-12:30 p.m. leave Civic Center—arrive at Foodstamps office.
12:45-1:00 p.m. leave Foodstamps office—arrive at Social Services.
2:00-2:15 p.m. leave Social Services—arrive at Foodstamps office.
2:30 p.m. leave Foodstamps office, return to Civic Center.

For additional information, contact Social Services at 374-3256.

Lauch Henry helped find the missing ingredient to educate minority engineers. Money.

Lauchland Henry is a teacher. And a scientist. And an engineer. He's genuinely concerned about other people. And he has expressed some of that concern in his participation with the National Fund for Minority Engineering Students.

The fund is a non-profit organization attempting to increase the number of Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Mexican-Americans and American Indians enrolled in engineering schools.

These under-represented minorities constitute a rich untapped resource to help fill the growing need for engineers. A need that is expected to continue through the mid-1980's.

IBM's social leave program enabled Dr. Henry to take a year's leave to assist the fund. And IBM continued to pay him his full salary.

The National Fund for Minority Engineering Students is a very worthwhile program. We think so. Lauchland Henry thinks so. But most important of all, lots of minority engineering students enrolled at colleges and universities all over the country think so. **IBM**



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