

- 10 -

Ritalin as a central nervous system stimulant may produce a number of adverse effects that include nervousness, insomnia, dizziness, nausea palpitation, headaches and occasionally blood pressure and pulse rate changes. Abdominal pain and weight loss during prolonged therapy have been reported and apparently occur more frequently in children than in adults. Overt psychotic behaviour and psychic dependence have occurred especially with chronic high dose use. For most of the amphetamines the psychosis is paranoid in nature and there is actually little difference between this mental disorder and that associated with the drug cocaine.

Overdose of these drugs will cause central nervous system overstimulation and excessive sympathomimetic effects resulting in vomiting, agitation, tremor, muscle twitching and convulsions that are sometimes followed by coma. Mental confusion and even hallucinations have been reported. Other symptoms includes sweating, headache, a rise in temperature, tachycardia, palpitations, and even cardiac arrhythmias.

I would like to leave with you the thought that those of us who are in legislation over drugs, those involved in the prescribing of drugs that have an effect on the brain and our emotions those who dispense them, and those who develop and market them need some common understanding about the dependence potential and liability of all drugs that are made widely available within our society. I have tried for myself to devise a system of thinking about drugs in terms of benefits as contrasted with risks. I have included for you some of the questions that I ask of all drugs whether of legal or illegal origin, and because these stray far from traditional pharmacology, I have tentatively called this the social profile of psychotropic drugs.

Questions are included under the heading of Benefits of its availability. The same number but different questions relate to the risk of the substance to individual and public health. There are also risks of the substance to safety in this includes the whole area of increased risk-taking behaviour, loss of psychomotor control. There are risks to our dominant social order and the culture of our people. Finally, I want to know something about its dependence liability. If one answers these various questions and providing a numerical value in terms of 0 to plus 10 of