

In consideration of the number of very unpleasant side effects a reasonable question is why? Like most drugs subject to abuse, amphetamines produce desirable responses that for some individuals outweigh any associated discomfort or, in gross overdosage, physical distress.

Compulsive users of amphetamines fall into roughly two categories.

Individuals who consume therapeutic doses or doses only slightly in excess of therapeutic doses routinely, but not necessarily daily, fall into the first category. Such individuals have learned to rely on the drug to help them cope with the demands of their social environment.

Amphetamines produce an elevation in mood and increased alertness. They counteract fatigue and improve the ability to concentrate. Physical performance may be enhanced considerably at times. Perhaps the most insidious perceived benefit is an increase of initiative and self-confidence.

Even though, on occasions, paradoxical responses occur, it is easy to understand how the student, the athlete, truck drivers and other individuals who receive rewards for either intense or prolonged efforts can be hooked. Consider also the overworked or harassed executive who finds that amphetamines improve the quality and quantity of his work output, while increasing self-confidence and the housewife who may use the drug simply to counteract boredom.