

14872 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

Some of these mildly addicted individuals use the drug for years and don't present any remarkable social problem except occasional distressing loquaciousness. With moderation, amphetamine effects sound good and have a definite appeal. Unfortunately all is not as rosy as it sounds. Users have difficulty sleeping and tend to either become exhausted or to use sedatives starting the classical "upper-downer" cycle. Some find alcohol an effective antidote for the stimulant side effects. Alcohol and sedatives as a whole are really more pleasant drugs and can become a far greater problem than the amphetamines. Actually people don't become physically dependent on amphetamines. They can stop use without any terribly unpleasant responses. But they can and do become physically dependent on alcohol and some even to the sedative hypnotic drugs.

Other problems associated with chronic use are less well defined; however, mental depression and gastrointestinal diseases appear to be frequent concomitants of routine amphetamine intake. The most important side effect of weight reduction programs in which amphetamine is employed as an adjunct, is therefore chronic compulsive use of moderate doses.

Experts regard even this form as abuse as more often a result of experimentation and subsequent reinforcement of a sensation of need for the drug in order to function, rather than as an iatrogenic problem. This pathway appears to be characteristic of all drugs of abuse. However, susceptibility to moderate abuse seems widespread and the risks involved even with adequately supervised short term use are undoubtedly real.