

Although not as extensively studied as amphetamine, phenteramine and other drugs with similar activity have been well characterized pharmacologically. Jerome Jaffe in the standard text, Goodman and Gilman cites the work of Martin and his associates (Clin. Pharmacol. Ther. 12:245, 1971) which suggest that some representatives of the series can produce central nervous system stimulation in experimental animals comparable to that of amphetamine depending upon the dose administered. Since human investigations have been restricted to recommended doses, the relevancy of these data in humans cannot be defined. However, as a response to the invitation to discuss this problem with you I have explored this possibility further. A former classmate and expert in the pharmacology of drug addiction, Dr. Gerald Deneau, provided me with data showing that primates under given conditions will self-administer some of these presumably less stimulant sympathomimetics. These data support the work of Martin et al and suggest that the appreciated amphetamine responses might be obtainable with elevated doses.

Most investigators would discount a significant abuse potential for phenteramine and similar drugs on the basis of the data available in the literature. The drugs have just not proven to elicit sufficiently rewarding responses in comparison to associated discomfort. Yet, we cannot sell the human animal short. A lesser crutch will frequently be acceptable if the parent is not available, even though it is reasonable to assume that unwanted side-effects will be proportionately amplified with higher doses.