

unpleasantness of its impact. But when has life ever been exempt from stress? In the long run is it desirable that a population be ever free from tension? Should there be a pill for every mood or occasion? It has been noted that when the drug is used satisfactorily in an emergency, there is a tendency among some persons to regard more and more of life's situations as emergencies until the pattern results in everyday usage of tranquilizing drugs. Their use is said to be becoming more and more common among persons in certain occupations.

Would you comment on that, please?

Dr. LEVINE. With regard to the widespread use of minor tranquilizers in particular, the desired action by persons taking them is not one of escape from the situation that they are in but rather to help them cope more effectively with the situation that they are in. My observations, and I cannot substantiate them with data at this time, are that the drugs are used, by and large, to help people perform better and to cope with life more effectively rather than using them as agents to dull them and to help them escape from their problems.

Now, to be sure, there probably is a small percentage of people who take too much drugs, and an even larger percentage who take too much alcohol, to escape from their problems, but I think the use of psychotropic drugs generally is to help people cope more effectively with problems of everyday life rather than to escape them.

Senator NELSON. Senator Dole?

Senator DOLE. I think your statement indicated that many of the stimulants were used for weight-reduction purposes.

Dr. LEVINE. That is correct.

Senator DOLE. I have a friend who was taking dexadrine and he was told about some of the harmful side effects. What are the side effects of continued use of dexadrine?

Dr. LEVINE. One of the common side effects is the irritability associated with the drug, a kind of jitteriness, inability to sit still and concentrate. It is well known that these drugs are sometimes used to help one stay up to study longer before examinations.

Senator DOLE. Good for campaigning sometimes?

Dr. LEVINE. This sometimes works well but other times makes the individual more jittery and more uptight and less able to concentrate on the task at hand. This would be one of the side effects.

Now, if the stimulant drugs, amphetamines in particular, are taken in very large and increasing doses, as I mentioned in the prepared statement, there have been cases reported, fairly widespread, of paranoid psychosis. The individual becomes very suspicious, fearful that someone is after him or threatening him, and actually goes into a psychotic state which is quite a dangerous one. A person must be hospitalized for treatment of that. But that occurs generally with high dosage.

Senator DOLE. Do you build up a tolerance to these drug things over a period of months or years to a point where they have no effect at all?

Dr. LEVINE. Yes; there is a tolerance built up to amphetamines. That is, if you take the same amount day after day after day it does not seem to have the same effect, so that individuals who take it chronically, if they want to have the same effect and feelings, do tend to increase the dosage and this does lead to problems that I mentioned.