

***"Experts" think Americans
should be popping more pills***

***Lyle Loughry
January 2009***

In case you haven't noticed, there is a prescription drug culture in this country that is out of control. I believe that Big Pharma (the pharmaceutical industry) and "modern" medicine, in general, won't ever be satisfied until every man, woman and child is taking some sort of prescription, and the more the better!

To give you some idea of where this kind of thinking is going, there's now a group of scientists who are promoting the idea that "healthy people" should "have the right" to start popping Ritalin, Adderall, and any and all "brain-boosting" drugs that are already being handed out indiscriminately to practically every so-called hyperactive kid and senior with memory issues.

This provocative proposition is being touted by seven scientists and ethics experts, and published as an opinion piece in a recent online edition of the journal, *Nature*. Two of the authors said they consult for pharmaceutical companies. They launched their argument by saying that "students are already striking illegal deals to buy and sell prescription drugs such as Adderall and Ritalin – not to get high, mind you, but to get higher grades, to provide an edge over their fellow students or to increase in some measurable way their capacity for learning." Demand for such drugs is likely to grow elsewhere, they contend. The stimulants Adderall and Ritalin are prescribed mainly for people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), but they have been found to help other people focus their attention and handle information in their heads, they note.

The commentary cites a 2001 survey of about 11,000 American college students that found 4 percent had used prescription stimulants illegally in the prior year. But at some colleges, the figure was as high as 25 percent.

As more effective brain-boosting pills are developed, demand for them is likely to grow among middle-aged people who want youthful memory powers and multitasking workers who need to keep track of multiple

demands, said one commentary author, brain scientist Martha Farah of the University of Pennsylvania. "It's a felony, but it's being done," Farah said. "Almost everybody is going to want to use them," she said. "We should welcome new methods of improving our brain function, and doing it with pills is no more morally objectionable than eating right or getting a good night's sleep," these "experts" wrote. They poo-poo the idea that this is a criminal offense.

"I would be the first in line if safe and effective drugs were developed that trumped caffeine," another author, Michael Gazzaniga of the University of California, Santa Barbara, declared in an e-mail. It's hard to believe that this man would prefer polluting the body with some chemical, rather than drinking a couple of cups of coffee, but realistically, it was only a matter of time until someone came out and said these things. It's the natural evolution of our culture's desire to medicate away all forms of human shortcoming.

Some health experts agreed that the issue deserves attention, but the commentary didn't impress Leigh Turner, a bioethicist at the University of Minnesota Center for Bioethics. "It's a nice puff piece for selling medications for people who don't have an illness of any kind," Turner said.

The authors of this opinion piece agreed that more research into the use, benefits and risks of such drugs is needed. Much is unknown about the current medications, such as the risk of dependency when used for this purpose. It's probably safe to assume that there's a good reason that drugs such as Ritalin are classified as a schedule II controlled substance - the same classification used for drugs such as morphine, cocaine, and other narcotics and amphetamines.

Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, said she was concerned that wider use of stimulants could lead more people to become addicted to them. That's what happened decades ago when they were widely prescribed for a variety of disorders, she said. "Whether we like it or not, that property of stimulants is not going to go away," she said.

Some of the consequences of taking this drug include heart attacks, growth problems, psychosis, blood disorders, and even death... and yet these "scientists" think it's OK for kids to be popping these things in order

to help their studying.

According to noted physician/researcher, G. Douglass Campbell, "It's a profoundly disturbing conclusion for such a large number of ostensibly educated "scientists" to have reached." "You want to stay sharp and focused? Make sure you're getting enough omega-3s. Get enough sleep. Have some caffeine. But if you think you need to pop a stimulant drug to improve your brain function, then maybe you do need to have your head examined."