

TESTIMONY OF
NORMAN ZINBERG, M.D.

At the request of Dr. Grinspoon and Mr. Cotton, I attempted to do a more systematic study of MDMA. Hence, I interviewed 30 people who have used it and know many other people who have used it; then on a monthly basis I have been interviewing two people who are taking it as part of their psychotherapy.

(1) MDMA appears to be a mild psychedelic. There are transient, consciousness-changing phenomena which last from two to four hours, and at no time have any of the users reported that they could not function as necessary while under the influence. This is in contrast to MDA and other psychedelics which generally last eight to twelve hours, have profound consciousness-changing effects, and make it difficult to function.

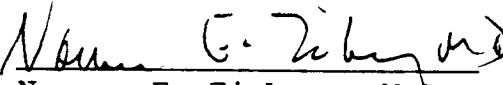
(2) MDMA appears to have a low toxicity. None of the users report the neurological changes or other symptoms of discomfort that occur with other psychedelics.

(3) As a result of its relatively repetitious, subjective mode of response, it is my impression that MDMA has a low potential for abuse and that few if any would use it repeatedly over any prolonged period of time.

(4) The drug can be used safely in psychotherapy with supervision. I made a special point of asking every possible question that might indicate that there might be untoward

reactions that had not yet appeared. Formerly, I had been the first person to give marijuana to human subjects in a controlled experimental way and also had conducted experiments to determine the subjective effects of psychedelics and other illicit drugs (Weil AT, Zinberg NE, Nelsen J. Clinical and psychological effects of marihuana in man. Science. 1968; 162:1234-1242; Zinberg NE. "High" states: a beginning study. Drug Abuse Council Publication #SS-3. Washington, DC: Drug Abuse Council, 1974). Hence, I have had considerable experience with determining whether drugs previously considered dangerous could be worked with experimentally.

(5) Just at a time when it seemed that there should be considerable experimental interest in the use of MDA and other psychedelics for the treatment of terminally ill patients and others with extensive problems with cravings, the drug became a source of controversy because of its illicit use, and finally all experimentation stopped. With MDMA we have another chance to advance our scientific knowledge in these areas by using a drug with far less impact, lower toxicity, and one that is shorter acting.


Norman E. Zinberg, M.D.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Middlesex County

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 22nd day of April, 1985.


Notary Public

My commission expires October 21, 19

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