

Serotonergic nerve terminal degeneration, even in the range of 80-90% , seems not to result in behavioral or functional consequences. After over 7 millions doses of MDMA have been taken in the United States there are still no cases in the literature of any individual experiencing symptoms of MDMA related neurotoxicity. Nor are there any published studies demonstrated that a relationship between repeated high doses of MDMA and long term behavioral effects. Dr. Thomas Insel's NIMH study found that even large doses to newborn rats had no long term behavioral effect. The only time that behavioral effects were noted occurred when MDMA was given in large amounts to pregnant rats, with the newborns exhibiting some abnormal behavior.

International Interest in MDMA Research

Several senior psychiatrists in the USSR have expressed an interest in learning about MDMA research. MAPS has offered to coordinate a conference to be held in Moscow in the summer or fall of 1989, and to raise funds to cover the expenses. Dr. Lester Grinspoon of Harvard Medical School, Dr. George Ricaurte, and Dr. Jorg Roth (research coordinator for the Swiss psychiatrists) all the intended speakers. It may actually be possible to arrange for collaborative studies in Moscow before FDA permission is granted for U.S. research.

MAPS has recently arranged for a donation of \$12,000 to Dr. Joseph Zohar, an Israeli researcher at Ben Gurion University. Dr. Zohar is seeking permission from the Israeli government to investigate the use of MDMA in the treatment of patients suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorders. Dr. Thomas Insel of NIMH has previously worked with Dr. Zohar researching treatments for obsessive-compulsive disorders , and will be reviewing the progress of the research .

The Swiss Neurotoxicity Collaborative Research Project

The human neurotoxicity experiment in the United States is scientifically complicated by the difficulty of creating control groups that exactly match the MDMA using group in all respects except the use of MDMA. Serotonin levels vary over 300% in the normal population, and personality ,diet and other factors play major roles in the variance. An ideal study design would have subjects acting as their own control, being tested at two points in time with administration of MDMA occurring between tests. This type of study is not permitted yet in the United States but is possible in Switzerland. In order to gather necessary data, the psychiatrists of the Swiss Psycholytic Association volunteered to collaborate with Dr. Ricaurte on a neurotoxicity study, even though the Swiss government has not specifically requested the study. Swiss subjects will donate spinal fluid before and after multiple treatment with MDMA, permitting the establishment of pre-MDMA levels. Sample analysis will be conducted by Dr. Ricaurte.

The Funding of Scientific Studies- An Appeal for Donations

Medical use of MDMA may prove very beneficial to many U.S. citizens, yet unless scientific studies are conducted this potential will remain unrealized. Since scientific studies require financial support, this MAPS report is both informational and an appeal for tax deductible donations from individuals who care about this research.