

Subjects in this study enter Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland on any Monday night of their choosing, completing their tests Friday around noon. NIDA pays all transportation expenses of the subject and \$400 compensation. NIDA is spending about \$6,000 per subject, and at completion of the experiment all personal data will be given to the subjects. The spinal tap procedure has a reputation much more fearsome than deserved. Though it feels very weird, it is relatively painless. The main complication, which occurs to about a third of the subjects, is spinal headaches which go away when you lie down but can last a week or more. I had one after my first spinal tap and not after my second, two years later. For more information about participating in this experiment, contact Dr. George Ricaurte at (301) 550-0993. Feel free to contact me as well.

### **SWITZERLAND PSYCHEDELIC RESEARCH UPDATE**

Last summer, the MAPS newsletter began with the heading GREAT NEWS and reported on the legal therapeutic use of LSD and MDMA in Switzerland, at the time the only place in the world where such work was legally taking place. Permission to prescribe MDMA or LSD was granted by the Swiss Health Authorities to a small group of six Swiss psychiatrists, all of whom belonged to the Swiss Association for Psycholytic Therapy (SAPT). A custom designed in-patient treatment ward was opened at the Swiss Red Cross Hospital in Bern for the more seriously ill patients.

**Since permission was granted, several hundreds of patients have been successfully treated with MDMA and LSD-assisted psychotherapy for psychological conditions ranging from post-traumatic stress syndrome, anorexia, depression, phobias and obsessive/compulsive disorders to marital counseling and psychological aspects of terminal illness.**

A survey of the six Swiss psychiatrists using psychedelics was conducted under the direction of Dr. Christian Scharfetter by Swiss researcher Ernst Benz, for his Ph.D thesis. Also newly minted, Dr. Benz reported that "MDMA was described as the safest of the drugs, since it caused anxiety in so few patients, and effected a mild and positively experienced emotional expansion so that patient resistance to the drug rarely occurred. Patients rarely had feelings of physical disintegration or isolation from their bodies [Note: As sometimes occurs with LSD]. MDMA inspires symbolic understanding and, above all, physical sensation and insight, strengthening patients enthusiasm for interaction and making communication more direct so that they deal with one another more easily and feel better able to tolerate others. All members of SAPT are of the opinion that MDMA in a standard dose of up to 150 mgs. is relatively non-toxic." (Ernst Benz's thesis, which also reviews the work of Drs. Grof and Leuner, is available for \$30 from MAPS but only in the original German.)

### **UNSUCCESSFUL MAPS ATTEMPTS AT COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH**

Due to the opportunity Swiss psychiatrists had to actually administer MDMA, MAPS attempted to initiate collaborative research on MDMA neurotoxicity between Swiss psychiatrists and Dr. George Ricaurte. Dr. Ricaurte visited the Swiss psychiatrists and prepared a protocol which called for spinal fluid to be taken from patients before and after exposure to MDMA, then placed in liquid nitrogen for shipment to Johns Hopkins for analysis.