

DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF LSD CONFERENCE

This October 21-22, in Lugano-Agno, Switzerland, the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences is sponsoring a very special international symposium commemorating the 50th anniversary of Albert Hofmann's discovery of LSD. The event is entitled "50 Years of LSD: State of the Art and Perspectives of Hallucinogens". The symposium will feature about twenty scientists from Switzerland, Germany and the United States presenting the latest data on the pharmacology, psychopathology, and clinical aspects of LSD and other psychedelics. One of the highlights of the conference will be a talk by Albert Hofmann on the history of the discovery of LSD. A small audience of about seventy-five people has been invited to participate in the conference sessions.

The conference will be the most scientific of all the conferences and gatherings that are taking place during this year of LSD's 50th anniversary. To mark this event, and to provide data that will lay the groundwork for future research with LSD, the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences will publish a book composed of papers by the conference presenters.

LSD AND MDMA PSYCHOTHERAPY RESEARCH

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In Switzerland, we (The Swiss Medical Society for Psycholytic Therapy) are working on two projects:

- We sent a questionnaire to patients to evaluate the psycholytic therapy that we conducted with LSD and MDMA between the years 1986-1990. The same questionnaire was sent to all my patients as well as to the patients of Dr. Widmer and Dr. Bloch. All together this is about 150 patients. We will complete the evaluation in time to present the results at the October 21-22 conference of the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences, "50 Years of LSD: State of the Art and Perspectives on Hallucinogens". We will also use the results in our negotiations with the Swiss Health authorities concerning the continuation of our research.

- The second project in preparation is Ulrike Drew's prospective study of the therapeutic safety and effectiveness of our treatments. Ulrike still has to solve some methodological problems. I hope the study design will be finished this autumn.

MDMA PHYSIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The foremost medical research in the world into the physiological effects of MDMA is taking place in Switzerland. Dr. Franz Vollenweider at the Psychiatric University Hospital in Zurich has conducted PET scan studies of the effects of MDMA. At the Institute of Pharmacy of the University of Bern, Dr. Hans Jorg Helmlin has completed MDMA pharmacokinetic studies. MAPS plans to submit the scientific articles reporting on this data to the FDA, and also hopes to present findings from these studies in the next MAPS newsletter.

PSILOCYBIN RESEARCH IN GERMANY

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In early July, Dr. Leo Hermle began a study to assess changes in facial expression and cognitive functions as a result of the administration of psilocybin. The study involves 10 volunteers and will use a double-blind with placebo methodology.

Dr. Hermle is currently seeking permission from the German Health Authorities to conduct a multi-site study comparing the effects of psilocybin, MDE, methamphetamine and placebo on a large number of both physiological and psychological parameters. Permission for the study is expected in the near future.

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