

SWISS RESEARCH UPDATE

summary of the status of clinical research
with **lsd** and **mdma** in switzerlandDr. Samuel **Widmer**

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THE PERMITS which enabled five Swiss psychiatrists to use LSD and MDMA in psychotherapy ran out in 1995 and until now have not been renewed. Negotiations are still on between the Swiss Society of Physicians for Psycholytic Psychotherapy (Schweizerische Ärztgesellschaft für Psycholytische Psychotherapie: SÄPT) and the Ministry of Health (Bundesamt für Gesundheitswesen: BAG). The authorities require us to design controlled scientific studies before they will reestablish the permits. It's too early to tell whether we will be able to continue with our research.

In the meantime, Peter Gasser conducted a retrospective evaluation of the cases of patients treated from 1988 to 1993. This study was presented in MAPS V.5, No. 3. Also, I legally trained approximately 25 psycholytic psychotherapists as SÄPT professionals during this time. Psychologist Roland Abegglen is currently conducting a scientific evaluation of the value and quality of these training sessions. We hope that this analysis as well as Dr. Gasser's retrospective will have a positive influence on the decisions of the BAG.

Because the scientific and therapeutic work has been stalled, the SÄPT is at present seeking to draw attention to its activities through public relations efforts. I have written several books on this topic. The first one, *Listening Into the Heart of Things*, was recently translated into English and will be reviewed in an upcoming issue of MAPS. Unfortunately my other books are not yet available in English. Recently a user's manual for MDMA consumers was published in the German-speaking countries. It addresses itself to young MDMA users and compares the use of MDMA in the techno/rave-scene with therapeutic applications.

In 1995 SÄPT will be ten years old. This birthday will be celebrated in 1996 with a small international congress. (Information about this conference will be presented in an upcoming MAPS newsletter.) In this way, the SÄPT members hope to draw attention to themselves and to their concerns, and with that to stimulate a new breakthrough in negotiations with the BAG.

In recent years successful experiments have been conducted in Switzerland in which drug-addicts have been administered heroin by doctors. General discussion about the lifting of Prohibition has also increased. Hopefully a new era of liberalization could emerge from this direction. Basic Phase I scientific experiments with psychedelic substances are still more readily permitted than therapeutic treatment in Switzerland as well as in the United States. •

The report by Dr. Vollenweider that follows in this issue describes current Phase I research in Switzerland.

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