

Progress Report: Follow-up study of **Bastiaans LSD therapy**

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A financial contribution from MAPS has opened the opportunity to conduct a preliminary study among clients who participated in LSD-assisted therapy with the Dutch psychiatrist Jan Bastiaans (see *MAPS Bulletin*, VII (2), p.3; 1998). In this progress report we give an account of the research activities that have been carried out so far and those ahead of us.

The present retrospective study is a simple version of a larger design. Its main objective is to establish systematically the subjective judgements of clients who underwent LSD therapy during the years 1950-'80 under supervision of Bastiaans and his co-therapists. The population under study is thus elderly people, mostly referred because of a range of war trauma. The semi-structured questionnaire that we designed enables us to relate their judgements with a range of other variables like sex, age, educational level, length of treatment, post-treatment care, medication, etc. Additionally, respondents can indicate their willingness to cooperate in a further, in-depth study.

The idea is to work out a profile that correlates with success or failure of the treatment and gain insight into the process of Bastiaans' method of LSD therapy. Moreover, we intend to investigate the possibilities for follow-up studies. We have already obtained permission to make use of all relevant written and audiovisual material available that is stored at several locations.

We attended an AMCHA (an institute offering psycho-social help to survivors of the Holocaust) congress on trauma to make ourselves known and to get acquainted with the atmosphere and interests of our respondents. We also tried to attract potential respondents and to bring attention to the challenge of financing further study. At the recent 'Psychoactivity' conference in Amsterdam we presented to a wider audience in order to raise additional support for the project.

Recruitment of respondents is a time-

consuming affair that is still going on. In the Netherlands, over a hundred smaller and bigger organizations and groups of war survivors exist. Through advertising in their publications we are trying to reach potential respondents. However, sometimes these publications appear very infrequently, so we have to await further reactions. We may need to apply snowball sampling techniques in order to attain the target number of at least 50 subjects.

So far, 16 people have contacted us by phone or mail. We expect this number to increase. The questionnaires were sent to 15 people and we handed out 10 questionnaires at the AMCHA congress. Until now only eight people have responded. They all are willing to participate in further research. Although we are more interested in LSD or psilocybin-assisted therapy, respondents who participated in narcoanalysis (where pentothal was used as adjunct to psychotherapy) are in the majority. The available data are presented here in a very preliminary way. The age of the respondents so far ranges between 55-80 years and they are generally well educated. Subjects were quite old at the time of their session(s) (average 54 years) and often had a (long) history of complaints and other therapies (range 2 months to 25 years; average 10 years). Half of them were referred by other professionals, the others contacted Bastiaans themselves. Their complaints consisted of sleeping disorders (nightmares), suicidal tendencies, tics or aggressive behavior. LSD was never administered in the first session. Most ex-clients received just psychotherapy, sometimes assisted with pentothal.

The two clients who participated in LSD therapy are (still) satisfied with the treatment by Bastiaans, who always worked with one or more of his co-therapists.

The subject is rather delicate in the Netherlands for reasons that are clear to most readers of this *Bulletin*. Nevertheless, the study is supported by ICODO (National Information and Coordination Services for war survivors), Centrum '45 (a national center for medical and psychological treatment of survivors of World War II and members of the Resistance), PAN (Psycho-Active Network) and—among others—medical psychologist Dr. Van der Ploeg (Free University, Amsterdam) who in the 1980s worked with Bastiaans. The scientific committee for the study consists of historian Dr. Schuyf (researcher, ICODO), clinical psychologist Dr. Kleber (Director, Institute for Psychotrauma) and therapist Mr. Reerds (Treatment Manager, Centrum '45). The relevance of this research lies in the implications it has for future therapeutic use of hallucinogens in indications such as post traumatic stress disorder. Finally, it possesses an evident historical dimension.

A final report will appear when the study is completed in Spring 1999. •

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Ketamine Psychedelic Therapy

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So far, our research team has treated 68 heroin addicts as part of a three-year study of ketamine psychotherapy (KPT). This study is being funded by MAPS and the Heffter Research Institute.

In June 1998, I presented a paper at the International Satellite Meeting "Building International Research on Drug Abuse" held in Scottsdale, Arizona. This meeting was organized by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) in conjunction with the 60th Annual Meeting of the College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD), the major conference in the U.S. (and in the world) focused on the problems of drug addiction.

The presentation raised a lot of interest among participants and even among some NIDA officials who noted that KPT could be a useful approach to the treatment of heroin addiction, particularly in those countries where methadone maintenance is not available. In spite of the fact that the mainstream psychiatric paradigm dominated at the NIDA/CPDD Meeting, there were many researchers there who felt positive about the perspectives of psychedelic psychotherapy in the field of addiction. In particular, I had a very interesting and productive discussion with Dr. Kenneth Alper of the Neuropsychiatry Center of New York University School of Medicine and with Dr. John Halpern of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Research Center of Harvard Medical School. I hope that we will be able to do collaborative research with ketamine as a result of our discussions in Arizona.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to MAPS which covered my hotel expenses in Scottsdale and to NIDA which covered my travel expenses from St. Petersburg to Arizona. Without their support I would not be able to attend the NIDA/CPDD Meeting because of the very poor economic situation in Russia, particularly in the area of medical science, which is almost out of Federal funding at the moment. •

MDMA Research Updates

*Serotonin and dopamine system interactions
 in the reinforcing properties of psychostimulants*

Wayne State University School of Medicine

Principal Investigator: Manuel E. Tancer, M.D.

This study began in September 1998 (see *MAPS Bulletin* Vol. VII No. 3, Summer 1997). A low dose (75 mg) of MDMA has been administered to subjects as part of the dose-finding phase.

MDMA Pharmacokinetics Study at UC San Francisco

Principal Investigator: John Mendelson, M.D.

The MDMA administration phase of this study has been completed. Data analysis is underway. •