

in 21 false stories included a sense of any threats or coercive elements and the presence in the child or reporting adult of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, often stemming from previous, documented incidents of sexual abuse, said Dr. Jones, clinical director of the C. Henry Kempe National Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect, Denver.

Nine of the 21 fictitious accounts of child sexual abuse were reported by adults. Six of these parents had been abused themselves and had significant residual psychological symptoms suggestive of unresolved post-traumatic neurosis.

Frequently, adults who claimed their children were abused were involved in custody or visitation disputes.

In seven cases there was a fusion of stories between young children and their mothers. In each case, custody or visitation was being argued; furthermore, an abnormal symbiotic or en-

not become jaded and think they are common; they are not, Dr. Jones said.

These 21 fictitious cases represent a small proportion of the several hundred child sex abuse cases seen at the Kempe Center in 1983-1985.

gations revealed that sexual abuse had not occurred.

Only about 8% of the reports were fabrications; most of these came from adults, Dr. Jones said at the Chicago conference.

Cautions Against Clinical Trials With MDMA In Psychotherapy

International Medical News Service
WASHINGTON — The "designer drug" known as "ecstasy" has such a high neurotoxic potential that clinical trials of its use in psychotherapy should be approached with the utmost caution, Charles R. Schuster, Ph.D., said at a science press seminar presented by the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration, Rockville, Md.

In animal studies, the drug, 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), caused long-term, possibly irreversible

damage to serotonergic neurons. This neurotoxicity seems to occur at doses only a few times greater than those needed to produce subjective effects, said Dr. Schuster, professor of psychiatry at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine.

There is no convincing evidence that MDMA, an amphetamine analogue, is effective in treating any psychiatric disorder. Until the drug's toxicity has been established, it is "extremely dangerous" for physicians to study the drug for its possible therapeutic value, he said.

Some psychiatrists disagree, however. In a letter to several congressmen protesting an emergency ban on MDMA, seven psychiatrists expressed concern about the increasing recreational use of the drug but suggested that MDMA should have been placed in a less restrictive category so that medical research on it could continue.

The ban, which placed MDMA in the schedule 1 category of the Controlled Substances Act, the most restrictive category that also includes heroin and cocaine, will remain in effect through June 1986 while hearings are held to determine MDMA's permanent scheduling (CLINICAL PSYCHIATRY NEWS, February 1986, p. 10 and August 1985, p. 15).

Dr. Schuster's associate was Dr. Lewis S. Seiden.

Media Aided Children After Challenger Loss

BY LEE TUNE
Staff Writer

The media may have somewhat over-emphasized the impact of the Challenger space shuttle tragedy on children, but the extensive media coverage of the aftermath of Challenger's destruction probably helped children cope with the disaster, child psychiatrists and others told this newspaper.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's education branch estimates that at least 2 million schoolchildren watched the shuttle launch and that about 20 million youngsters would have watched schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe's lessons from space that were to be shown on the Public Broad-

casting System, a NASA spokesman said.

Not surprisingly, the children in Concord, N.H., McAuliffe's hometown, were strongly affected by the accident, with many of the younger children in particular experiencing generalized anxiety and fear. Younger children also tended to be confused about what really happened, said Dr. James Wells, deputy director of Central New Hampshire Community Mental Health Services in Concord.

The elementary school that Christa McAuliffe's children attend was "an emotional shambles," and in the high school where she taught, students and teachers, particularly teachers, were very upset and shocked, he said.

(Continued on page 22)

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