

Ritalin - The Hidden Effects...

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In 1986, The International Journal of the Addictions published a very important literature review by Richard Scarnati. It was called "*An Outline of Hazardous Side Effects of Ritalin (Methylphenidate)*" [v.21(7), pp. 837-841].

Scarnati listed a large number of adverse affects of Ritalin and cited published journal articles which reported each of these symptoms.

For every one of the following Ritalin effects, there is at least one confirming source in the medical literature:

- Paranoid delusions
- Paranoid psychosis
- Hypomanic and manic symptoms, amphetamine-like psychosis
- Activation of psychotic symptoms
- Toxic psychosis
- Visual hallucinations
- Auditory hallucinations
- Can surpass LSD in producing bizarre experiences
- Effects pathological thought processes
- Extreme withdrawal
- Terrified affect
- Started screaming
- Aggressiveness
- Insomnia
- Since Ritalin is considered an amphetamine-type drug, expect

amphetamine-like effects

- Psychic dependence
- High-abuse potential DEA Schedule II Drug
- Decreased REM sleep
- When used with antidepressants one may see dangerous reactions including hypertension, seizures and hypothermia
- Convulsions
- Brain damage may be seen with amphetamine abuse.

Many parents around the country have discovered that Ritalin has become a condition for their children continuing in school. There are even reports, by parents, of threats from social agencies: *"If you don't allow us to prescribe Ritalin for your ADHD child, we may decide that you are an unfit parent. We may decide to take your child away."*

This mind-boggling state of affairs is fueled by teachers, principals, and school counselors, none of whom have medical training. Yet even if they did...

The very existence of the *"illnesses"* for which Ritalin would be prescribed is unproven. It is merely assumed.

In commenting on Dr. Lawrence Diller's book, *Running on Ritalin*, Dr. William Carey, Director of Behavioral Pediatrics, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, has written, *"Dr. Diller has correctly described... the disturbing trend of blaming children's social, behavioral, and academic performance problems entirely on an unproven brain deficit..."*

On November 16-18, 1998, the National Institute of Mental Health held the prestigious *"NIH Consensus Development Conference on Diagnosis and Treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder [ADHD]."* The conference was explicitly aimed at ending all debate about the diagnoses of ADD, ADHD, and about the prescription of Ritalin. It was hoped that at the highest levels of medical research and bureaucracy, a clear position would be taken: this is what ADHD is, this is where it comes from, and these are the drugs it should be treated with. That didn't happen, amazingly. Instead, the official panel responsible for drawing conclusions from the conference threw cold water on the whole attempt to reach a comfortable consensus.

Panel member Mark Vonnegut, a Massachusetts pediatrician, said, *"The diagnosis [of ADHD] is a mess."*

The quite conventional and orthodox panel essentially said it was not

sure ADHD was even a valid diagnosis. In other words, it virtually admitted that ADD and ADHD might be nothing more than attempts to categorize certain children's behaviors---with no organic cause, no clear-cut biological basis, no provable reason for even using the ADD or ADHD labels.

The panel found *"no data to indicate that ADHD is due to a brain malfunction [which malfunction had been the whole psychiatric assumption]."*

The panel found that Ritalin has not been shown to have long-term benefits. In fact, the panel stated that Ritalin has resulted in *"little improvement on academic achievement or social skills."*

Panel chairman, David Kupfer, professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh, said, *"There is no current validated diagnostic test [for ADHD]."*

Yet at every level of public education in America, there remains what can only be called a voracious desire to give children Ritalin (or other similar drugs) for so-called ADD or ADHD.

The 1994 Textbook of Psychiatry, published by the American Psychiatric Press, contains this review (Popper and Steingard): *"Stimulants [such as Ritalin] do not produce lasting improvements in aggressivity, conduct disorder, criminality, education achievement, job functioning, marital relationships, or long-term adjustment."*

Parents should also wake up to the fact that, in the aftermath of the Littleton, Colorado, school-shooting tragedy, pundits and doctors began urging much more extensive *"mental health"* services for children. Whether you have noticed it or not, this no longer means, for the most part, therapy with a caring professional. It means drugs. Drugs like Ritalin.

In December 1996, the US Drug Enforcement Agency held a conference on ADHD and Ritalin. Surprisingly, it issued a sensible statement about drugs being a bad substitute for the presence of caring parents: "[T]he use of stimulants [such as Ritalin] for the short-term improvement of behavior and underachievement may be thwarting efforts to address the children's real issues, both on an individual and societal level. The lack of long-term positive results with the use of stimulants and the specter of previous and potential stimulant abuse epidemics, give cause to worry about the future. The

dramatic increase in the use of methylphenidate [Ritalin] in the 1990s should be viewed as a marker or warning to society about the problems children are having and how we view and address them."

In his book, *Talking Back to Ritalin*, Dr. Peter Breggin expands on the drug's effects: "*Stimulants such as Ritalin and amphetamine... have grossly harmful impacts on the brain -- reducing overall blood flow, disturbing glucose metabolism, and possibly causing permanent shrinkage or atrophy of the brain.*"

In the American press, although many articles have appeared covering "*the debate*" about Ritalin and ADHD, no newspaper or TV network has taken it upon itself to hammer on all the lies, day after day, month after month. That kind of campaign could turn around the whole nation on this vital subject---but of course, pharmaceutical advertising is a more powerful force.

And one should not forget that Ritalin came out of a Swiss drug giant called Ciba Geigy (now Novartis) fifty years ago. That company once had very close business ties with the infamous Nazi cartel, IG Farben. Farben stood for inhuman experiments on human beings. Read the adverse effects of Ritalin again, and consider that millions of children take those pills every day.

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