

Letters to the Editor

LSD Misadventure in Middle Age

Sir:

The use of the hallucinogen lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) is usually associated with young people in their teens and twenties. Although this substance is normally self-administered, in many instances it has been given to individuals without their knowledge. This report describes a case of a middle-aged woman who unknowingly received a dose of LSD under quite uncommon circumstances.

A 54-year-old white female was brought to a San Antonio, Texas, hospital emergency room by her husband. She was visibly frightened, in a severe state of hyperreflexia, and was experiencing perceptual distortion. The resident on duty called the authors (then stationed at the U.S. Army Medical Laboratory, Fort Sam Houston), who subsequently interviewed the husband. He stated that his wife had consumed about 2 oz (60 ml) of vodka in a mixed drink approximately an hour before he decided to seek medical attention for her. Soon after drinking the vodka, she began to exhibit bizarre behavior. The husband immediately suspected the bottle of vodka, poured what remained down the sink, and placed the bottle in the garbage. Upon request, he retrieved the bottle and brought it to the laboratory. The patient was treated with diazepam; recovery was uneventful.

The bottle of vodka had been given to the patient by a 71-year-old widowed friend. The latter had died three months prior to the incident described; her death was attributed to natural causes by her personal physician.

Less than 1 ml of vodka remained in the bottle. Fluorometric analysis [1] (Aminco-Bowman SPF; excitation, 335 nm; emission, 435 nm) revealed LSD present at a concentration of 1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$. Gas chromatographic assays for common adulterants of LSD such as amphetamine, methamphetamine, cocaine, or strychnine yielded negative results. No blood or urine specimens were obtained from the patient.

The patient's presentation was highly suggestive of LSD ingestion—an acute panic reaction coupled with an acute toxic reaction [2,3]. Based on the laboratory findings of approximately 30 μg LSD/30 ml of vodka, she may have received upwards of 60 μg of the drug, quite enough to produce the effects noted, particularly in a hallucinogen-naive individual [4]. The circumstances surrounding this donation of vodka containing LSD pose a number of interesting speculations, but remain shrouded in mystery. The elderly lady had lived alone, and her survivors had no knowledge of where or how she obtained this item.

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References

- [1] Dal Cortivo, L. A., Broich, J. R., Dührberg, A., and Newman, B., "Identification and Estimation of Lysergic Acid Diethylamide by Thin Layer Chromatography and Fluometry," *Analytical Chemistry*, Vol. 38, No. 13, 1966, p. 1959.

- [2] Ungerleider, J. T. and Frank, I. M., "Management of Acute Panic Reactions and Flashbacks Resulting from LSD Ingestion," in *Acute Drug Abuse Emergencies: A Treatment Manual*, P. G. Bourne, Ed., Academic Press, New York, 1976, pp. 133-136.
- [3] Klein, N. S., Alexander, S. F., and Chamberlain, A., *Psychotropic Drugs: A Manual for Emergency Management of Overdosage*, Medical Economics Company, Oradell, N.J., 1974, p. 51.
- [4] Hoffman, F. G., *A Handbook on Drug and Alcohol Abuse—The Biomedical Aspects*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1975, p. 154.

Some Observations on Vaginal Phosphoglucomutase

Sir:

A study of the 52 semen-positive vaginal samples on which we have obtained an identifiable phosphoglucomutase (PGM) type gives the following pattern:

		PGM Type of Victim		
		1-1	1-2	2-2
Type found in vaginal samples	1-1	17	0	0
	1-2	10	19	0
	2-2	0	1	5

The table demonstrates that the results are disproportionately weighted toward the PGM type of the victim. Furthermore, in none of the 25 cases in which the victim was Type 1-2 or 2-2 was PGM 1-1 found on the vaginal samples. This strongly suggests that one is looking at more than seminal PGM.

The study of Price et al [1] documents the presence of PGM activity in semen-free vaginal samples. Our case sample survey supports that finding and should dictate the necessity of determining the PGM type of the victim before interpreting PGM findings on vaginal samples.

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Reference

- [1] Price, C. J., Davies, A., Wraxall, B. G. D., Martin, P. D., Parkin, B. H., Emes, E. G., and Culliford, B. G., *Journal of the Forensic Science Society*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1976, pp. 29-42.

Dr. Luke "on" the Journal

Sir:

I am having problems controlling myself reading the short or running titles of articles that appear in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*. The unnatural use of the word "on" is the focal point of my dilemma.

Certain titles, such as "Adcock on Latent Fingerprints," seem to pose no problem. But for other titles it is a side-splitting challenge even managing to read the article with that word "on" staring me in the face, page after page.

For example, "McBay on Marihuana" is an unfortunate announcement only to be surpassed by the two immediately following articles, "Luskus et al on Gases" and, believe it or not, "Kram on Illicit Amphetamine." These are scientists? Someone call the Sheriff! Add to these "Harvey on Window Glasses" and "Shanahan on Cartridge Cases" and you begin to see the scope of idle-minded possibilities for daydreaming. "Bonte and Bleifuss on Postmortem Dating" is the supreme mind-expander, propelling the discipline, in a trice, into the far reaches of the 21st century. And all of these in but a single issue!

How can we go on this way and keep a straight face? Please help. My stomach is killing me.

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