

## Ritalin Proven More Potent Than Cocaine

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A recent study reveals that the drug, Ritalin, (prescribed to approximately 10 Million school-age children for a scientifically unproved mental disorder), is more potent than cocaine. Thirty years ago the World Health Organization (WHO) concluded that Ritalin was pharmacologically similar to cocaine in the pattern of abuse it fostered, and cited it as a **Schedule II drug** - the most addictive in medical use. The Department of Justice also cited Ritalin as a Schedule II drug under the Controlled Substances Act, and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) warned that "*Ritalin substitutes for cocaine and d-amphetamine in a number of behavioral paradigms.*"

Despite decades of official warnings and supporting research confirming the similarities of methylphenidate (Ritalin) and cocaine, tens of millions of children in the United States have been prescribed this psychotropic drug for a widely accepted, yet scientifically unproved, mental condition – attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Now a recently concluded study at the Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) not only confirms the similarities of cocaine and Ritalin, but finds that Ritalin is more potent than cocaine in its effect on the dopamine system, which many doctors believe is one of the areas of the brain most affected by drugs such as Ritalin and cocaine.

The outcome of this research was so surprising that team leader Nora Volkow, a psychiatrist who is associate laboratory director for life sciences at BNL, told the media that she and the team were "shocked as hell" at the results. "*The data,*" explains Volkow, "*clearly show that the notion that Ritalin is a weak stimulant is completely incorrect.*" This revelation should be of no surprise to the medical and psychiatric communities, given the already documented warnings about methylphenidate by federal law-enforcement agencies and international organizations, but it is noteworthy on one level. Volkow's newly released research reinforces what critics long have known - that the "medication" being prescribed for ADHD is not merely similar to cocaine, but is, in fact, more potent. And, the results raise further questions about the validity and repercussions of having an entire generation of children diagnosed with a "mental disorder" or "brain disease", which to date has no basis in physical science.

Volkow's findings, published in the Journal of Neuroscience and reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association, may act as a wake-up call to parents, educators and lawmakers who have yet to address the question of whether ADHD is a real physical, medical or neurological disease that can be scientifically confirmed, or is even confirmable. Because the ADHD diagnosis is the No. 1 reason for drugging school-age children, and Volkow's research reconfirms that Ritalin isn't just kid stuff, parents may want to re-evaluate their child's treatment. The numbers alone are a telltale sign of where the push to medicate is going.

According to the DEA, the number of prescriptions written for Ritalin since 1991 has increased by a factor of five (2.2 million) and about 80 percent of the 11 million prescriptions written for Ritalin are to "*treat ADHD*". This means that nearly 9 million children have been prescribed the cocaine-like "medication."

Furthermore, according to a study published last February in the Journal of the American Medical Association, "*Trends in the Prescribing of Psychotropic Medications to Preschoolers,*" psychotropic medications have tripled in preschoolers - ages 2 to 4 - during a five-year period. More disturbing, say critics, given Volkow's recent revelations, is that during the last 15 years the use of Ritalin increased by 311 percent for those ages 15 to 19, and 170 percent for those ages 5 to 14. The most recent figures available reveal that in 1998 there were approximately 46 million children in kindergarten through grade 12. Twenty percent - one of every five children in school - have been doped with the mind-altering drug.

This can be good news – albeit, only for investors in the Swiss-based pharmaceutical company Novartis – which makes Ritalin. For instance, if the number of children taking the drug increased fivefold, so did the drug company's resultant profits and (presumably) stock value. In a June 28, 1999, article, "*Doping Kids*", Insight Magazine estimated that Novartis generated an increase in its stock-market value of \$1,236 per child that is prescribed Ritalin. Based on

these evaluations, the drug company would have enjoyed an increased stock-market value of approximately \$10 billion or more since 1991!

In fact, the number of children being prescribed the cocaine-like drug is rising at such a rate that, while good for investors, if ADHD were based on science and were a communicable disease, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would consider it a major medical epidemic among America's youth. In the meantime, prescriptions continue to increase even as researchers continue to focus on the effect of psychotropic drugs such as Ritalin rather than on how scientifically to verify or validate the diagnosis. And, critics of this mass drugging have become convinced that is no accident.

Take neurologist Fred Baughman for example, who tells Insight, *"Yes, they have proved, and we've known for decades, that Ritalin alters/damages/changes the brain. But with no evidence that ADHD is a disease, we also know that these children are normal. All this research [from Volkow at BNL] says to me is that over 10 million children diagnosed as having ADHD are being damaged by Ritalin - just as with cocaine and every other psychotropic drug. The point," explains Baughman, "is that normal children are being drugged exactly like the Cali and Medellín cartels, but under the guise of medication to help and with all in the medical community being knowing participants. She [Volkow] found something very alarming about Ritalin and at the same time is writing like ADHD is a proven thing - that ADHD is a real disease. It just isn't so. It's pure propaganda and there never has been proof of a specific chemical [or] physical abnormality in children diagnosed with the alleged ADHD - None."*

Renay Tanner, an expert in human rights and psychiatry and a doctoral candidate in sociomedical sciences at Columbia University, tells Insight, *"Volkow isn't saying anything new. She's just looked at the issue with a different technique. The important thing to remember is that no child ever has died from ADHD, yet a number of children have died from the 'treatment', not to mention the brain damage, stunted growth and suicidal feelings they experience. One has to ask why children are being targeted for the myth of the chemical imbalance when no one can show that an alleged sufferer has a chemical imbalance and no one - certainly not the medical community - even knows what such a chemical imbalance might be."*

Tanner continues: *"The brain is too complex and our understanding of it is too minimal to be giving children these drugs. We know the drugs cause harm to the brain but have yet to find any real evidence that they are helpful. Sure, the drugs may shut them up, and I suppose that's good for the parents and teachers, but is it good for the children? I strongly believe that the federal government should remove the financial incentives from school districts as a kind of reward for the number of children put on these drugs. After all, why does the government do this? Is it good intentions gone bad or social policy with unintended consequences? At the most, Volkow's research is excellent evidence that children should not be given Ritalin. One has to ask why this research wasn't done before millions of children were put on a mind-altering drug."*

Despite Volkow's revelations about Ritalin's potency, critics don't see changes in the status quo anytime soon. Beverly Eakman, founder of the National Education Consortium, a nonprofit corporation specializing in education law, and the author of *Cloning of the American Mind*, tells Insight, *"The agenda is to dope as many kids as possible because it makes them more suggestible - more open to doing what normally they wouldn't do."* And, according to Eakman, *"These drugs make children more manageable, not necessarily better. ADHD is a phenomenon, not a 'brain disease'. It is culture-caused, and what we need to focus on is that we are manufacturing drugs for diseases that don't exist. Because the diagnosis of ADHD is fraudulent, it doesn't matter whether a drug 'works.' You've got doctors being encouraged to prescribe these drugs whenever a complaint from a patient is too difficult or costly to diagnose. Why aren't people up in arms about the fact that children are being forced to take a drug that is stronger than cocaine for a disease that is yet to be proven?"*

Critics of the ADHD diagnosis have been asking this question for years, but the psychiatric community appears to have turned more and more to medicating. A closer look at what leaders in psychiatry are saying may prove helpful. In January, for example, National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Director Steve Hyman reported at the NIMH Advisory Council meeting that *"we can make correct clinical diagnoses if the right kind of evaluation is available to children. When proper diagnosis is made, methylphenidate/Ritalin can be safe and effective."* Then, Hyman warned: *"We ignore mood disorders in children at our peril. Just because a child is in their seat doesn't mean they are okay."*

Critics suggest that it also doesn't mean that they aren't okay, and that Hyman's remarks only confirm that psychiatric diagnosis is subjective - that diagnosis of mental health depends upon who is looking.

# The Ritalin – ADHD Scam

By Nicholas Regush -ABCNEWS.com

Between 1990 and 1996, prescriptions for *methylphenidate*, known as Ritalin, increased more than 60 percent, according to the Drug Enforcement Agency. Back in my newspaper days, I often would catch reporters describing their editors as having the attention span of a gnat.

When I began work in TV, several producers quietly pointed out correspondents and senior producers who were known to have the attention span of a sand fly. But, to my knowledge, none of those allegedly afflicted were required to take a drug to reverse their attention deficit.

This came to mind when I was in the thick of dissecting the scientific literature on Ritalin, a drug reputed to calm hyperactivity and help people pay attention to things. Its use is extremely popular these days for schoolchildren who, for example, have trouble sitting still, or difficulty keeping track of what they are being taught.

## Overprescribed or Under-Prescribed?

In reviewing the data, I came across a study from Virginia showing that up to 10 percent of children in second through fifth grades are on medication to fight such problems, after being diagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Being the compassionate type, I naturally wondered whether tests would show that at least 10 percent or even more of reporters and producers in newsrooms where I have worked also should have been on Ritalin or other brain drugs.

And, should the scientific diagnostic drive extend into the professions, perhaps tests would show that many more psychiatrists, pediatricians and teachers have the attention span of a gnat or sand fly and need to be advised of the fact.

Maybe many doctors have ADHD without the benefit of Ritalin and therefore lack the attention span or patience to consider other factors that may contribute to the behavior and demeanor of their young patients, such as how and where the children live, what they eat, whether they are loved, and the consequences of being taught in schools with curricula too underdeveloped to meet modern childhood needs.

## The Real Epidemic

Am I being unkind to the Ritalin pushers? Yes, and I want to be. This Ritalin scam/sham/flimflam must stop! It is far out of control. While there are some children, and some editors and producers, who obviously need major help in adjusting to our zany world, there is far too much drugging going on. The drugging is the real epidemic, not ADHD.

**A Note to Psychiatrists:** Please read this paragraph carefully, with close attention, so you won't waste time writing me nasty e-mails about tragic cases of truly uncontrollable children. I readily admit there are such cases. I am most concerned that the science on ADHD and related so-called illnesses is not very compelling. Sure, studies are popping up all the time now, but most are preliminary.

## Looking for Evidence

Consider the latest, most publicized entry, imaging the brain to detect biochemical differences, a tool some claim could lead to a test for ADHD. Watch out, because psychiatrists who may have the attention span of a gnat are already proclaiming this foray into brain imaging as a triumph in biological psychiatry. It is nothing of the kind. We know too little of the brain and its amazing interconnected elements to be so foolishly brash. We also know too little of what brain imaging really means, and we are lacking gold standards for such testing.

What we essentially have here is an epidemic of dumb doctoring and child abuse bordering on the criminal, sitting on a limited view of human behavioral variability. Granted, there are children at the extreme end of the continuum who need a variety of assistance, not necessarily drug-focused help. Meanwhile, there are probably millions of kids unnecessarily on drugs, obtained not from pushers in schoolyards but from pushers with medical degrees.

## The Easy Way Out

Rather than stare social problems straight in the face and try to determine why certain children are anxious, depressed, irritable or noisy troublemakers, the tendency in this culture is to try to drug the problems away. What if the problem is simply that some of these kids have minds, and spirits, of their own?

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If you, or anyone you know, are currently taking Ritalin – or any of the other drugs prescribed for ADD / ADHD symptoms – and would like to know about other alternatives available to these damaging drugs – please contact us at the following: [HealthStyles4U@HealthStyles4URx.com](mailto:HealthStyles4U@HealthStyles4URx.com) Your initial phone call and interview will be FREE.

We have a variety of Nutritional Testing, Evaluation, and Consultation techniques that could be of great benefit to you, your loved ones, and friends you care for.