

### **Amphetamines: An Overview**

- Amphetamines include:
- Benzedrine
- Dexedrine
- Methedrine
- Methamphetamine
- Desoxyn
- Biphedamine
- Dexamyl

### **History:**

- Amphetamine was first synthesized in a laboratory in 1887.
- The first commercial product from the drug group was marketed over the counter in the US in 1932. It was an inhalant for nasal decongestion.
- DEA banned its use for this purpose in 1959, but ban did not go into effect until 1971.
- During WWII, several American, Japanese and German soldiers were given the drug Benzedrine to make them more effect and alert.

### **Medical Uses for Amphetamines**

#### **To treat:**

- Narcolepsy
- Depression
- Alcoholism
- Schizophrenia
- Obesity
- Hyperactivity (Ritalin)
- Parkinson's
- Fatigue
- Addiction (nicotine and caffeine)
- Sea Sickness
- Bed Wetting

### **Recreational Use:**

- It was apparent fairly quickly that amphetamines have certain side effects (like euphoria) that make them attractive for recreational use.
- During the 1940's and 1950's, prescription amphetamines were increasingly used for illegal purposes.
- By the 1960's, amphetamines were one of a handful of extremely popular street drugs.
- Also, amphetamines began to be used in an illegal instrumental way for weight loss and to combat fatigue.

### Common Street Names:

- Some street names for amphetamines (both past and present):
- Speed
- Ups
- Uppers
- Crank
- Splash
- Meth
- Crystal
- Ice

### When People Take Amphetamines

- Usually taken in a tablet or capsule form (with the exception of meth, which we will get into later).
- Usual dosage is between 2.5-10 mg.
- Heightened competence in motor skills/ mental acuity
- Increased alertness
- Increased energy
- Need for motor activity (such as walking) bc of increased energy
- Euphoria or inhibition of depression (in a normal person, no effect in clinically depressed people), make any kind of person with sad feelings go away. People with depression feel no effect.
- Increased heartbeat
- Inhibition of appetite
- Constriction of blood vessels
- Dry Mouth
- Extreme feelings of confidence

### Use Today:

- During the 50's, 60's and 70's, amphetamines were commonly used as a diet pill. It was later found that any weight loss effects are minimal and temporary, and the side effects can be dangerous. Far fewer physicians prescribed amphetamines for this (or any other purpose) during the late 70's, 80's, 90's into today.
- Today, amphetamines have few accepted medical uses.
- The PDR (Physician's Desk Reference) only lists two.
- Amphetamine Sulfate
- Dextroamphetamine Sulfate
- Used to treat narcolepsy, short term obesity treatment, and ADHD.
- Narcolepsy is rare, and physicians turn to other treatments for obesity and ADHD.
- Even Ritalin (the generic form is methylphenidate) has become less frequently prescribed today than in 2001.

#### Side Effects:

- Blood Vessels Constricted
- Amphetamine Psychosis (violence, disordered thinking, mania, paranoia)
- "Punding" (counting Cheerios in a box, arranging things, spending two years covering a wall with used postage stamps) the need to do something

#### Withdrawal Symptoms:

- Psychological, not physical.
- Severe depression (contemplate suicide)
- Anxiety
- Fatigue
- Lethargy
- Sleeplessness
- Nightmares
- Irritability
- Fear Terror

#### Methamphetamine

- Heroin seen as safer since you did not have to find as much or take as much, building up a tolerance. Heroin does not cause panic attacks or fear terrors.
- A more potent "sister" of amphetamines.
- It is more potent than amphetamines, so its use tends to escalate to high dose, compulsive use far more rapidly.
- This is due to route of administration: amphetamines are usually in pill form, meth is usually injected, snorted or smoked.
- One form of methamphetamine is marketed as a prescription drug in the US- Desoxyn.
- Methedrine is a form of methamphetamines
- Its use peaked in 1967
- Many youth used it, it was injected in very high doses
- Many meth users alternated between heroin (a depressant) and meth (a stimulant) so they could come down from their meth high.
- They began to use heroin more and more, it was seen as safer and had a less severe impact on their lives.
- Instrumentally, the dosage was 5-10 mg in tablet or capsule form.
- A recreational user injected 500-1,000 mg in one dose, that would cause unconsciousness or death in non-seasoned users, but causes pleasure in recreational users.
- Methamphetamine is a Schedule II drug (as are other Amphetamines)
- Like Amphetamines, Methamphetamine is a stimulant.
- Causes users to go days without sleep (3-5 at a time) followed by long periods of sleep (24 hours or more)