

# Drugs in Modern Society

Charles R. Carroll



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Charles R. Carroll

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Recent interest in the wellness and human potential movements, stress-management programs, holistic health care, physical fitness, patients' rights, and natural foods suggest that people are becoming more concerned about improving their own health and preventing health problems. This new emphasis on "self-care" and health enhancement is, in part, a reaction to the recognized limits of medical care for those already sick or injured. More importantly, "self-care" and wellness-promoting activities are the result of a growing awareness that one's own life-style and personal health habits play critical roles in the development of avoidable diseases and injuries.

According to *Healthy People, The Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention*, many of our most pressing health problems are related to excesses—too much smoking, abuse of alcohol, faulty nutrition, overuse of medications, fast driving, and the unrelenting pressure to achieve. As the Surgeon General notes further, at least seven of the ten leading causes of death in the United States could be reduced substantially if people at risk improved just five habits: diet, smoking, lack of exercise, alcohol abuse, and use of antihypertensive medicine.<sup>1</sup>

Amazingly, half of the life-style excesses identified by the Surgeon General pertain directly to the use or abuse of various drug substances, particularly tobacco, alcohol, and prescribed medicines. Of course, drug misuse and abuse may be related indirectly on occasion to the other excesses of living.

While the individual's role in promoting health and preventing disease is receiving greater importance, it should be recognized that people usually make personal life-style choices within a society that

glamorizes many hazardous behaviors through advertising and the mass media. Social influences involving peer pressure and the encouragement of risk-taking activities have a tremendous impact, especially on young people. In addition, society continues to support industries that produce unhealthful products, unevenly enacts and enforces laws against behaviors such as driving while intoxicated, and offers somewhat ambiguous messages about those behaviors that are advisable.<sup>2</sup>

Because of these potentially destructive, inaccurate, and often confusing and irrational influences on people, and because of the widespread use and abuse of drugs and medications in America, this text is designed for healthy people—for those who wish to preserve the potential for benefits and minimize the potential for harm that accompany the use of any drug or medicine.

Intended for use in drug education courses for students from a variety of disciplines, *Drugs in Modern Society* provides current, accurate, and documented information about drug substances presented in a scientific and objective manner. Mind-altering or psychoactive drugs are the major focus of this text, but consideration is also given to non-psychoactives that are frequently misused and to the legal recreational or social drugs infrequently viewed as part of the real drug problem in America.

1. Julius B. Richmond, *Healthy People—The Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 14.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Although your author explores a variety of drug-related concerns, portrays certain drug-taking behaviors as health-threatening and even life-threatening, and emphasizes the positive benefits of recommended health-promoting actions, only you, the reader, can apply such ideas and interpretations to your own life-style. It is your author's fondest hope that you will be better prepared to make more mature and more responsible decisions regarding drug use.

From a philosophical perspective, *Drugs in Modern Society* seeks to enhance your freedom of choice in terms of drug use or nonuse. Free choices can be made in consideration of how personal actions affect oneself. However, truly free choices might also concern one's relations with the spirits of other people, "... relations involving love, trust, integrity, responsibility, honor, and sacrifice."<sup>3</sup> On occasion, then, such freedom will allow us to do what may not always be best for ourselves. Our freedom of choice will allow us to do what is best for others.

Not an exclusive value associated with drug-taking behavior, this interest with freedom as a dimension of human-spiritual interaction might serve as a guide and a challenge throughout your investigation of *Drugs in Modern Society*.

## Organization of the Text

Each of the chapters in this text is self-contained and somewhat independent of the others. However, you, the reader, will discover the following sequential development of topics, and the interrelatedness of all subjects pertaining to drugs and drug-taking behaviors.

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 present an overview of drug problems in America, an understanding of the persistence of mood modification via drugs, despite legal, moral, and social restrictions, and a simplified explanation of drug actions within the human body and of the frequently observed components of drug dependency.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 examine drug substances, including the narcotics, sedative-hypnotics, and ethyl alcohol, all of which have a basic depressant effect on the central nervous system.

Chapters 7 and 8 deal with central nervous system stimulants, particularly cocaine, amphetamines, caffeine, and nicotine found in tobacco products.

Chapters 9 and 10 focus on various psychedelic, mind-expanding drugs, but reveal phencyclidine and marijuana as unique psychoactive substances—drugs more appropriate in their own separate, distinct classifications.

Chapters 11 and 12 describe the less obvious aspects of America's drug problem: the frequent misuse and abuse of over-the-counter and prescribed medicines, many of which are not psychoactive in their effects.

Chapters 13 and 14, the concluding chapters, offer some insights into countermeasures that can be employed to prevent substance abuse and chemical dependency, or to reduce the severity of drug-related problems in a drug-using society.

Chapter 14 will be of primary interest to those engaged in developing drug education programs in schools, colleges, churches, community health agencies, and businesses and industries. Some instructors will omit this chapter from their assigned readings, due to the special nature of planning for educational programs.

## Learning Aids

Included in this text are various learning aids that should make your study of drugs and drug-taking behavior more effective and more meaningful. As the reader, you can choose those study aids that seem most valuable for enhancing your knowledge and the adoption of health-promoting and disease-preventing behavior in a drug-using society.

3. Robert D. Russell, "Holistic Health," Chapter 1 in *Education in the 80's: Health Education*. Robert D. Russell, ed. (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1981), p. 21.

## **Chapter Outlines**

The chapter outline includes all the major topic headings within the body of a particular chapter. This outline can help you gain an overview of the chapter's contents, and is useful in locating sections dealing with a specific topic.

## **Key Terms**

At the beginning of each chapter is a listing of several important terms related to various aspects of drugs, drug-taking behavior, or drug-abuse prevention. These words are defined or described in the chapter and are sometimes used frequently within both that chapter and subsequent chapters of the text.

## **Chapter Objectives**

Also at the beginning of each chapter are several statements that will indicate what the reader can expect to learn or be able to do after mastering the chapter contents. By reading the objectives before studying the chapter, you will identify important sections of the narrative. These can be used as guides in your study.

## **Chapter Introductions**

The opening paragraphs of each chapter provide a brief preview of or commentary on the chapter's contents. After reading these comments, it is a good idea to browse through the chapter, paying particular attention to topic headings, illustrations, charts, and boxed material, so that you get a feeling for the kinds of ideas and major concepts included in the chapter.

## **Self-Assessment Inventories**

Some of the chapters contain personal assessment inventories or exercises pertaining to drug abuse, alcohol abuse, cigarette smoking, and detection of chemical dependency. These instruments will allow you to evaluate your own knowledge, attitudes, or

personal behaviors related to a specific drug substance or drug-taking behavior. Although these inventories allow you to measure your own ideas, feelings, or status and thereby involve you in a more direct way with the subject matter, they are not meant to be the bases for an academic grade.

## **Chapter Summaries**

At the end of each chapter a summary is provided to help you review the significant ideas presented in the narrative. A few days after you have read the chapter, you may want to reread this short section. If you discover some terms or major concepts that seem unfamiliar, you may want to reread the related portions of the chapter narrative. You may also find it useful to refer once again to both the key terms and chapter objectives at the beginning of the chapter to determine your familiarity with the content of the chapter.

## **Review Questions and Activities**

Appearing at the end of each chapter are several review questions that can be used to check your basic understanding of the major ideas presented in the narrative. The activities are intended to enhance the factual content of the chapter. If you can answer these questions or perform the tasks suggested, this is a signal that you have developed a significant comprehension of the subject matter in the chapter. If you cannot do this, you should reread certain sections of the narrative to increase your understanding of the ideas involved.

## **Glossary**

After the last chapter in the text, there is a glossary or compilation of drug-related terms with definitions. You may wish to consult this extensive listing for a concise explanation of a particular word or phrase. Sometimes the glossary definition of an important term will provide a more inclusive meaning than the one found in the narrative of a chapter. The glossary can also be a useful guide to the correct spelling of a term or process.

# Acknowledgments

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*Charles R. Carroll*

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## Drugs, Drinks, and Medications

### An Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the nation's drug problem in terms of legal as well as illegal drug usage, and medical vs. recreational use of psychoactive drugs. Often overlooked as part of the drug scene is the large consumption of alcoholic beverages and tobacco cigarettes.

After providing several basic definitions, the chapter focuses on various classifications of

psychoactive substances, the types of adverse reactions, and the prevalence of use and abuse of specific mind-altering chemicals. Several criteria are offered to help individuals distinguish between drug use and abuse. The chapter ends with an analysis of drug use and abuse among three population subgroups: women, the elderly, and athletes.



## Chapter Outline

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The Drug Problem

Basic Definitions

*Drug Misuse*

Drug Classifications

*Selected Psychoactive Drugs and Schedules*

Drug Problems: Health-Related Consequences

The Drug Scene: An Overview

The Drug Scene: Prospects for the Future

Drug Use or Drug Abuse: How Can You Tell?

*Danger Signals of Drug Abuse*

Drug Use and Abuse among Women

Drug Use and Abuse among the Elderly

Drug Use and Abuse among Athletes

## Key Terms

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Adulteration

Depressant

Doping

Drug

Drug Abuse

Drug Dependence

Drug Misuse

Ergogenic Agent

Flashback

Idiosyncratic Response

Inhalant

Medicine

Mutagenic Effect

Narcotics

Organic Brain Syndrome

Over-the-Counter Drug

"Peashooter"

Polydrug Use

Prescription Drug

Psychedelics

Psychoactive Drug

Psychosis

Stimulant

Therapeutic Agent

Therapeutics

Toxic Reaction