

'Happy Pill' Is Only Temporary Solution to Anyone's Problems

By ROY O. GILBERT, M.D.
Los Angeles County Health Officer

For well over two years an estimated 7,000,000 citizens of this country have been spending 135 to 150 million dollars annually on tranquilizers, or "happy pills" as they are popularly called, in order to obtain some relief from the normal strains and stresses common to everyday living.

So popular have these pills become that they are even being administered to man's best friend. The president of the American Animal Hospital Assn. recently reported that tranquilizers are sometimes

prescribed to alleviate certain nervous conditions in dogs.

Many Kinds Out
More than a dozen different kinds of these pills are now on the market, and undoubtedly more will appear. At present, not too much is known about either the values or dangers in using them, although in general the dangers seem to stem from self-medication.

Exactly how the body reacts to tranquilizers is not known. Some of them apparently block the transmission of nerve impulses to the skeletal muscles, causing them to relax. Others, it is thought, release a particular hormone within the body that may have a tranquilizing effect on brain centers. In any event, and whatever the effect, the use of these pills are wide-discriminating.

Habit Forming?
Whether or not these "happy pills" are habit forming is not yet officially determined. In the opinion of the U. S. Narcotics Commissioner, there is at present no evidence that they create addiction. On the other hand, the Expert Committee on Addiction-Producing Drugs of the World Health Organization believes that tranquilizers are potentially habit-forming. One indication of addiction created by the continuing use of these drugs, it is said, is the withdrawal symptoms that sometimes occur in individuals after customary dosage is stopped.

It is definitely known in medical circles that the use of tranquilizers in certain individuals is not without danger, especially when they are self-administered. Some of the unwanted side effects so far reported in medical literature include jaundice, low blood pressure, skin eruptions, gastrointestinal upsets, and general toxic reactions.

Some Depressed
Research has also shown that the pills tend to make some tense people depressed rather than calmer, and in other individuals the result can be the creation of a state of extreme excitement.

It is interesting to note that the U. S. Army Chief of Staff recently issued a four-week grounding order affecting those pilots who were taking tranquilizers more or less regularly. In the opinion of the army medics, four weeks was the length of time for the effects of the pills to wear off.

It is understandable, of course, that the reflexes of pilots must be kept in tip-top condition, but the same necessity for quick physical response is relatively as important in many civilian situations. High speed traveling on crowded highways is, according to statistics, even more hazardous than flying.

Opinion Varies
Although medical opinion on the subject is far from unanimous, physicians nevertheless seem to be generally agreed that tranquilizers probably represent an important contribution to treatment methods in mental illness, as they soothe and relax highly

agitated patients. It is further reported that these drugs have been used successfully in reducing anxiety states experienced by patients who are being treated for alcoholism.

At least for the time, it is well to approach the use of tranquilizers with some caution and abstain from using them without medical advice. The day has not yet come when lasting peace of mind can be safely purchased in the form of a pill.

Appleby Will Study School Curriculum

Max M. Appleby, an administrative assistant to the superintendent and high school principal in San Rafael, has been named as a curriculum consultant by the Torrance Unified School District.

Approved Tuesday by the school board, Appleby will study problems relating to the high school curriculum.

A graduate of the University of California, Appleby received his master's and doctor's degrees at the University of Southern California. He has served as teacher and principal in the Long Beach, Burbank, and San Rafael school systems.

He will serve as an administrative assistant to the superintendent.

County to Test Big Sirens Again Friday

The regular monthly test of civil defense sirens in Los Angeles City and County, along with many other local jurisdictions in Southern California, will be conducted at 10 a.m., Friday, May 31st, Henry S. Eaton, coordinator, Region 1, California Disaster office, has announced.

For Classified Results

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RED FEATHER AMBASSADOR . . . Judy Wolfe, 21804 Halldale Ave., receives a special Community Chest merit award from General H. T. Miller, vice president of the Harbor Area Welfare Board. The award was for Judy's contribution as a YWCA Red Feather ambassador before clubs and organizations during chest campaign time. It was presented publicly at the Harbor YW's annual dinner meet held recently.

Measles Top Disease List

It's the same old story week after week — measles are the leading disease, both in Torrance and throughout Los Angeles County.

For the two-week period ending May 11, 27 of the 49 cases of disease reported in the Torrance health district were diagnosed as measles. In the whole county 1553 of the 2719 cases were reported as measles. Thirteen of the cases were in the city of Torrance. So far the county has had 11,143 cases of measles.

Other diseases reported in this area during the period included scarlet fever, 7; mumps, 6; gonorrhea, 3; syphilis, 2; and epilepsy and tuberculosis, each 1.

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FIRST FLIGHT . . . A first solo flight was made April 12 by Naval Aviation Cadet Robert D. Miller, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dale D. Miller, 5035 Arvada St., Torrance. He also is receiving training in communications, navigation, and other aviation fields at Saufley Field Naval Auxiliary Air Station at Pensacola, Fla.



IN RIFLE MATCH . . . Participating in the Western Division matches at the Camp Matthews rifle ranges near San Diego over the week end was Marine T/Sgt. John G. Jones, of 1500 W. 247th St., Harbor City, Jones, stationed at the Marine Corps Base at Camp Pendleton, is a highly-rated rifle and pistol expert in the Marines.



MILITARY POLICE . . . Army Pvt. Richard Derieg, 23, whose wife, Shirley Ann, lives at 3340 W. 182nd St., recently was graduated from the Military Police training center at Fort Gordon, Ga. He entered the Army in November and completed basic training at Fort Ord, Calif. Derieg's mother lives in Inglewood.

Marine Cpl. Gerald M. Johnson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Martin L. Johnson of 17009 Wilkie Ave is serving with Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron 314 of Marine Aircraft Group 33, at the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station, Santa Ana.

The 11-week course includes instruction in all basic military subjects and the firing of all basic infantry weapons.

Upon completion of training new Marines are assigned to a unit for further infantry training, or to one of the many Marine Corps schools.

Richard Arguelles, son of Mrs. Momá Lambo of 24439 Hawthorne Ave., is scheduled to complete recruit training May 29 at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego.

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