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Scientists paying volunteers \$100 per day to take recreational drugs

BOSTON (AP) — "Wanted: People aged 18 to 29 to take recreational drugs as part of a scientific study. Earn up to \$400 in four afternoons."

That recent newspaper advertisement is on the up and up.

It's part of the quiet battle waged by drug companies and the federal government to find ways to curb recreational use of prescription drugs.

Scientists hire the volunteers to learn what makes some drugs so pleasant that they are likely to be abused.

They hope to use that knowledge to develop drugs that are as effective but not pleasurable enough for illicit use as their more habit-forming counterparts.

Drug companies use the studies to decide whether to market a new drug, and in what dosages.

Federal agencies use the data to decide whether to approve a drug for sale or impose certain restrictions on how it may be prescribed.

If the drug made subjects euphoric, they are asked whether they would take it again for pleasure, and how much they would pay for it on the street.

The four categories of drugs that cause the most trouble, and are most scrupulously tested, are painkillers, diet and sleeping pills and anti-anxiety drugs, said Dr. John J. Boren of the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Drug companies have been trying for years to develop painkillers as effective as morphine but not as addictive, Boren said. So far, none have been found.

"We want people who have taken sedative drugs recently and taken them often enough that we're reasonably sure nothing's going to happen to them."

— Dr. Jonathan O. Cole, psychopharmacologist

Jonathan O. Cole, chief of psychopharmacology at McLean Hospital, a psychiatric facility which is a Harvard University teaching hospital.

"We want people who have taken sedative drugs recently and taken them often enough that we're reasonably sure nothing's going to happen to them," Cole said.

Occasional users and those who appear mentally unstable are rejected. Usually about one-third of the applicants are accepted.

For the BuSpar study, Cole recruited subjects who had taken Valium or barbiturates for a year but seemed stable.

On four different afternoons, they were given Valium, BuSpar, Quaaludes or a placebo, "dummy" pill with no effects, but were not told which they had taken.

The subjects found the Quaaludes very euphoric, the Valium about half as euphoric, and the BuSpar not much different from the placebo.

The Food and Drug Administration approved the drug for sale in 1986, and it is now one of the most successful drugs that Bristol-Myers has ever launched, according to Janet Lindholm, the company's manager of consumer affairs.

BuSpar now competes with other anti-anxiety drugs including Valium, Zanax and Ativan at a market worth \$600 million to \$700 million a year, said Scott Litherland, another company spokesman.

Lack of witnesses may stall investigation

HOUSTON (AP) — Police were trying Tuesday to piece together the events of a shooting in a predominantly Vietnamese area that left two people dead and three others injured.

Their efforts, however, were handicapped because witnesses fled the area near Givral's Sandwich Shop before police arrived Monday afternoon.

"There was nobody here when the police arrived, just bodies and hulls," police spokesman Sgt. Dan Turner said.

A businessman near the shooting scene said the Asian community is very tight-knit and unlikely to go to police.

Homicide Sgt. Brian Foster, however, said he didn't think investigators would have a problem obtaining information because of a language barrier or anything else.

No charges or arrests have been made in the case, police said Tuesday. A motive for the shootings also has not been determined. Turner said investigators had not yet found any evidence showing that the shootings were gang related.

The killed and wounded were all described as Asian males.

One of those killed was identified as Minh Nguyen, 19, of Port Arthur. The other Asian teen killed has not been identified, police said Tuesday.

The names of the injured were being withheld for their own safety, police said.

A 14-year-old youth was listed in stable condition in the intensive care unit at St. Joseph Hospital after suffering being shot twice in the right leg, hospital spokesman Robert Cahill said. One bullet remains lodged near his right hip while the other bullet entered and exited near the

right knee, Cahill said.

A 22-year-old who suffered a gunshot wound in the lower back was listed in fair condition at Ben Taub Hospital, spokesman Roger Whidmeyer said.

The third injured person, a 22-year-old man, remains in stable condition at AMI Twelve Oaks Hospital after undergoing surgery for a gunshot wound to the abdomen, spokeswoman Claire Rowland said.

The shooting scene is in an area near downtown that has a heavy concentration of Vietnamese businesses and is commonly known as "Little Saigon."

A witness, who asked to remain anonymous, said he saw three to four men in a white car approach the area and open fire.

"One of them got out of the car and opened up fire. All the shots

looked like they came from the car in the car.

"It looked like he was firing a Uzi because I never saw the barrel light up, and the shots were constant," the man said. "It sounded like the Fourth of July."

"I saw one guy get shot by the restaurant and one run across the street and fall down," he said. "When I leaned over in my seat, I didn't get back up until I heard screams. It really shook me up because I kept thinking they were going to come over where I was."

Turner said a large number of bullet shells littered the sandwich shop, indicating the shootings took place in the store. One of the victims died in the sandwich shop. The other ran outside and fell dead across the street behind a car.

House members draft bill to strip Secretary of election officer power

AUSTIN (AP) — Three Democratic state legislators Tuesday introduced a bill to strip the secretary of state of his power as chief elections officer and give the authority to a bipartisan commission.

The bill's lead sponsor, Rep. Alex Moreno, D-Edinburg, said it was a response to "a partisan approach to dealing with election matters" by Republican Secretary of State Jack Rains' office.

Rains called the allegations "wild, undocumented charges," and said much of the criticism of him was "partisan doggerel."

"We have innumerable letters praising the conduct of the elections division for its professionalism, discharging its statutory and constitutional duties," Rains said. "The number of letters of complaint I can count on one hand, and each of those has been investigated and dealt with."

In Texas, the secretary of state is appointed by the governor and oversees elections, among other duties.

Although there have been problems with Democratic secretaries of state in the past, Moreno said partisanship has increased since Gov. Bill Clements appointed Rains two years ago.

"Particularly during this last (November 1988) election, the secretary of state's office in several instances showed it was operating the election process in a partisan way, a highly discriminatory way, at least as it relates to South Texas," Moreno charged at a news conference.

"Certainly this is not an isolated incident or strictly the responsibility of Secretary of State Rains," Moreno said. "(But) under this administration, it's risen to new heights. It's now to the point that I think we need to do something about it."

Moreno was joined by Reps. Renato Cuellar, D-Weslaco, and Juan Hinojosa, D-McAllen, all of whom complained about the way the secretary of state's office handled a Hidalgo County ballot problem last fall.

Their bill would create a State Election Commission to oversee voter registration and elections. Such a change has been endorsed by the Texas Democratic Party.

Under the bill, the governor would be required to appoint three Republicans and three Democrats to six-year terms on the panel from a list of candidates offered by the chairmen of the two major political parties.

In Advance

OCA to 'Unmask the Magic' of Mardi Gras

Off-Campus Aggies will bring the magic of New Orleans to Texas A&M with its third annual Mardi Gras celebration Thursday.

With the theme "Unmask the Magic," the day's festivities will include a 90-minute parade, a free jazz concert from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Rudder Fountain and a Mardi Gras Ball at 8:30 p.m. at Graham's Central Station.

Admission to the ball is \$2 for women and \$4 for men. Costumes are not required. The dance will feature jazz, in addition to country-western and Top 40 music.

The parade will begin at 6 p.m. at Lot 49 near Cain Hall and will end near Lewis Street.

About 30 on- and off-campus groups, are planning either to march or enter floats in the parade. These groups include Parsons Mounted Cavalry, the Sailing Club and various Greek organizations.

Individuals on the float will throw traditional Mardi Gras treats, such as beaded necklaces, doubloons (imitation gold coins) and wrapped candy and gum, to the crowd.

Cancer Society sponsors nutrition programs

The American Cancer Society will have nutritional training sessions Feb. 2 at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m., and Feb. 6 at 7 p.m. at the American Cancer Society Building on 3207 Briarcrest Drive.

The classes, taught by registered and licensed dietitians, will concentrate on good nutrition in preventing cancer. For more information, contact Dr. Alice Stubbs at 823-7128.

Parking lot closed for Mardi Gras Parade

Parking lot 49, a blue lot behind Cain Hall, will be closed Thursday, Feb. 2, from 5-7 p.m.

The lot will be used for Mardi Gras Parade assembly and judging. No vehicles will be allowed to enter or exit the lot during this time.

If you will need your vehicle during this time, you must remove it from the lot before 5 p.m.

AGGIEVISION

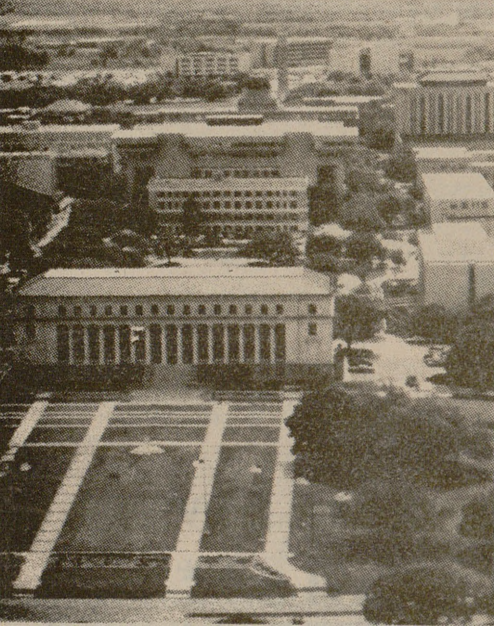
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