



# HIGH-LIGHT



## ALCOHOL AND DRUG NEWS BRIEF FOR EMPLOYERS

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### Drugs of abuse - How informed is your workforce ?

#### Employee substance abuse – Are you managing it or tolerating it ?

In my weekly encounters with Human Resource of Occupational Health personnel it is not uncommon to hear “we do not have much of a problem here “ or “when our Supervisors pick up the signs, they refer them”. I am not always convinced that such Companies have done all they can to cut down on unnecessary costs directly or indirectly attributable to substance abuse. Some industrial sectors simply have certain risk factors inherent to the nature of their operation which makes it unlikely that they are not somehow picking up the tab for the hidden costs. How does your Company rate on these risk factors ?

- 1 Does a substantial proportion of your workforce work under dangerous conditions ?
- 2 Does a substantial proportion of your workforce do physically demanding and/or dirty work ?
- 3 Does a large section of your workforce work long hours or do shift work ?
- 4 Are there strong social pressures within certain sections of your workforce to drink/drug ?
- 5 Do you suspect that your Supervisors are uncertain of which steps to take in the event of suspected intoxication
- 6 Does your Company lack a comprehensive policy and procedure regarding employee substance abuse ?
- 7 Are your Supervisors uncertain about telltale signs of abuse?
- 8 Is there an established but informal culture of after hours socializing and drinking amongst certain ranks ?
- 9 Does your Company rely exclusively on direct observation to detect intoxication without any form of onsite breath of urine testing ?
- 10 Does a large number of your employees live in sub-economic/poor areas ?
- 11 Does the majority of your workforce consist of young, male, unskilled workers ?

Since not all these items carry equal weight, risk cannot be ascertained by simply totaling the yes answers. They nevertheless represent a fairly comprehensive risk assessment borne out by literature and experience -

In this issue of HIGHLITE we focus on drugs Whether you are in HR, or in occupational health you will probably find the quiz entertaining and informative. To make it more challenging we have decided to do a tour of some of the lesser known drug groups. **Why not hand out these at your next employee briefing and let them try their hand at it. Please contact me should you require more information about any of these.**

#### Test your drug IQ

- 1 Nicknamed liquid Ecstasy, this “new” drug is an anaesthetic with powerful sedative properties which is sold as a colorless tasteless liquid in small bottles.....
- 2 Dagga, unlike alcohol, is fat soluble which means that it accumulates in the fatty tissue of the body. This means that the active ingredient of Dagga rapidly accumulates in the ..... which is the most fatty organ in the body.
- 3 This is a “ sister “ drug of # 2. It is made by purifying the drug mentioned in #2 with baking soda. The dried residue looks like white stones and is even more addictive than # 2 .....
- 4 This is a relatively new drug in S.A. It comes in tablets of various shapes and colours, is very popular at dance clubs and is a powerful stimulant. \_ \_ \_ \_ Y
- 5 This off white tablet is usually used in combination with another very common drug. It’s distinctive mark is a R L on the one side and a M<sup>x</sup> on the other. ....
- 6 This tranquilizer tablet causes a sleepy high when used and is renowned for causing temporary amnesia. It is extremely difficult to detect in body fluids afterwards and has been implicated in rapes .....

- 7 The long term use of Dagga causes irreversible brain damage. True / False
- 8 This commonly used drug is a member of the Narcotic family, is a powerful painkiller and causes the same type of physical dependence as Heroin or Morphine. It is sold as a pink, grooved tablet with the inscription Wellcome F<sup>3</sup>A .  
.....
- 9 A person under the influence of Daggas has high/low blood pressure.
- 10 An indirect danger associated with this drug is that users drink too much water which causes the brain to swell. What is the name of this drug ? .....
- 11 This drug produces severe hallucinations, is usually sold as microdots, i.e., strips of tiny cartoon picture such as Mickey Mouse or Garfield. ....
- 12 This powerful stimulant drug derives its name from the sound it makes when smoked  
.....
- 13 Although it is not physically addictive, this drug has caused many deaths by interfering with the body's temperature regulation and causing blood clotting in the lungs.  
.....
- 14 This powerful stimulant drug usually comes as a white powder, causes severe psychological addiction and withdrawal is always accompanied with an overwhelming depression.....
- 15 This drug usually causes the following symptoms : Tendency to laugh, giggle or talk excessively and inappropriately, red eyes, dry mouth or throat and being very active.  
.....
- 16 Encircle the correct answer. Medically, the narcotic drugs ( i.e the drugs made from the opium poppy) such as Morphine, Pethidine, Codeine and Heroin are all good :  
a) anti-depressants b) Appetite suppressants  
c) Tranquilizers d) Pain killers
- 17 This commonly abused drug triggers psychosis in heavy users which is marked by poor concentration and memory, feelings of fearfulness, restlessness and seeing or hearing things which does not exist.....
- 18 The effects of this drug ranges from excitement and euphoria after small doses to distortions of shapes and colours following large doses. Often the user feels detached from his body and experiences a loss of emotional control. Flashbacks may occur for years after use has stopped. What drug is this ?  
a) Dagga b) Ecstasy c) Morphine d) LSD

- 19 This drug is usually sold as a off-white tablet and was used as a sleeping tablet before it was banned in South Africa in 1974. Withdrawal symptoms from this drug includes stomach cramps and bleeding, depression, convulsions, irritability and sleeplessness. ....
- 20 The common streetnames White Doves, Adam, Rolex, Playboys and Swallows all refer to the drug :  
.....

Open the attachment to see how you fared !

**SANCA PRESENTS AN EMPLOYEE DRUG EDUCATION SESSION WHICH PROVIDES FULLY EXPLAINED ANSWERS TO THESE AND OTHER QUESTIONS. THE BRIEFING ALSO FOCUSES ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS AND ASSISTANCE**

**DID YOU KNOW ?**

- 1 Scientists recently discovered that the brain actually produces a dagga-like substance which acts on the many cannabinoid receptors in the brain. This neurotransmitter is called anandamide which is the Sanskrit word for bliss.
- 2 Despite protestations by the Canadian Medical Association, this country now permits the prescription of Marijuana for certain terminal and chronic ailments.
- 3 An abnormal hormonal reaction to Ecstasy may be responsible for the recent spate of fatalities involving young female first time users. According to media reports the increase in these fatalities have been confirmed by various hospitals in Cape Town.
- 4 Using an Australian model, the cost of medical station attendances due to alcohol at a Free State gold mine was estimated at R 593,592 per annum. The overall cost was estimated at R3,986 million per annum.

**Wish to share your ideas, comments, contributions with us ? Please do. We welcome any criticism as long as it consists of unqualified praise !!**

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