

POSSIBLE INFLUENCES OF DRUGS ON ESP ABILITY

CEDRIC W. M. WILSON (U.S.A.)

To investigate the effect of any pharmacological agents on ESP abilities in man, two initial assumptions must be made: (1) That ESP is a physiological function of man; (2) That, like other physiological functions of the brain, it is capable of being changed by pharmacological agents. If these assumptions are made, then ESP can be investigated by using the normal methods for therapeutic trials, and the standard methods for measuring ESP ability.

Using these methods in the University of Liverpool, on a large number of University students and staff, it has been found that dexamphetamine causes a significant reduction in scoring ability. Universal depressants of the central nervous system, stimulants of the cerebral cortex and drugs which affect special parts of the brain stem have also been investigated.

The conclusions drawn from these experiments strongly suggest that ESP ability is a physiological function of man. Drugs of the barbiturate series depress ESP ability presumably by depressing the nervous center associated with this phenomenon in common with other specialized centers in the cortex and brain stem. Ergotropic drugs, such as dexamphetamine and caffeine also depress ESP ability, whereas drugs of the trophotropic series, such as the tranquilizers, appear to cause heightened ESP ability.

The effects of these drugs may be explicable in terms of their mode of action on the brain stem and reticular formation. These parts of the brain phylogenetically are very old and

they might well contain the centers associated with the physiological activity of ESP which has been shown to be more predominant in primitive man. The experiments which have been performed suggest that drugs which activate the trophotropic system may elevate ESP ability, and the drugs which inhibit this system depress the ability.