Sol Yurick, biochemist, Yale University

Yurick was the head chemist in the team that first synthesized the drug pentasodium chloradimethaline. *His laboratory then conducted the first animal experiments with* Psychamine™.

We discovered Psychamine quite by accident, but I think it was a fortunate accident. We began by feeding it to white mice who were in crowded cages in the laboratory. Prior to the use of Psychamine, these mice exhibited all the signs of anxiety and aggression typical of animals in a crowded, dirty environment. Humans, too, for that matter.

The mice who got the Psychamine seemed to calm down at once. Their movements became slower, and they stopped fighting with each other for a chance to get at the over-crowded mice food and water containers in the corner of the cage. It is my opinion that Psychamine had a positive effect in this case, since it helped these mice to cope better with a difficult environment. Instead of quickening their activity levels and heartbeats (and thus risking nervous breakdown or heart attack), they lowered their levels of metabolism and activity. If I were to anthropomorphize, I'd say the drug produced a sensation of "contentment" in the mice.

At various stages in the experiments, we would sacrifice some of the mice in order to inspect their internal organs under autopsy. We found no damage to the liver or the brain, the two areas where we expected a drug like Psychamine to have harmful side-effects.

There is another side to the coin, though. Male mice compete with each other for mates, usually, but the mice who got the Psychamine wouldn't fight each other. The female mice seemed confused about which males to mate with, since none were fighting for them, but mating still went on—it was just the females who chose their mates instead of the males fighting and the females mating with the winner.

Our experiments with the white mice indicated a few important points about Psychamine to me. It can surely help people cope with bad situations or with depression. In this respect, it seems a lot better than most of the tranquilizers on the market today. But if misused, it can contribute to the harm of the user. The drug itself is not harmful. We're as sure of this as scientists can be without being fortune tellers: in over ten years of tests, we have seen no evidence of side effects or of any combinatory effects when mixed with other drugs, such as alcohol or barbiturates. I don't believe it will have any lasting effects on the minds of users, though it does induce a temporary state of what might seem to some people like not caring much about the world, and what might seem to others a kind of powerful contentment. Any potential problem with Psychamine is really a side effect of this contentment. I can imagine people harming themselves simply by always being satisfied with their situation, not feeling enough discontentment to work to change anything.