

LAWYERS Assistance

By J.E. (Buddy) Stockwell

DOPING WITH ADDERALL

Many are familiar with the term “doping” after U.S. cyclist Lance Armstrong was stripped of all his titles in 2012 because he used performance-enhancing drugs to win races. In the aftermath, he lamented he had no choice because, according to him, competitors were doping too and he had to “level the playing field.”

Unfortunately, some college students have adopted the same type of “doping to win” mentality. The pressure to win is even more extreme in law and medical schools. The drug of choice — Adderall, a prescription amphetamine and Schedule II drug (drugs with the highest potential for addiction and abuse).

Like cocaine, Adderall is a stimulant that, when used by a typical person, increases dopamine, causes euphoria and facilitates staying awake for hours. Interestingly, however, Adderall has a much different effect on people with ADHD; it slows their minds down and reduces hyperactivity.

For people without ADHD who are taking Adderall non-medically as a study aid, there are significant risks. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 89.5 percent of college students who use Adderall non-medically also report binge drinking. Half are heavy alcohol users. They are three times more likely to use marijuana, five times more likely to use pain medications without a prescription, and eight times more likely to use tranquilizers without a prescription. Also, 28.9 percent of illicit Adderall users have tried cocaine compared to only 3.6 percent of college students in the general population who do not use Adderall non-medically.¹

In the worst cases, Adderall use results in death. In 2010, 21-year-old Vanderbilt University student Kyle Craig lost his life.² Suffering from increasing deterioration of

Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program, Inc. (JLAP)

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Toll-free (866)354-9334
www.louisianajlap.com
Email: lap@louisianalap.com

his mental health due to Adderall abuse, he stepped in front of a passenger train and ended his life.

In 2011, 24-year-old Richard Fee lost his life. Psychotic from Adderall abuse in attempts to make the grades to enter medical school, he hung himself in his closet. The *New York Times*' article, “Drowned in a Stream of Prescriptions,”³ is a horrifying look at the dangers of student doping with Adderall and how easy it is to get the drug. According to the article, Fee was “an intelligent and articulate young man lying to doctor after doctor, [with] physicians issuing hasty diagnoses, and psychiatrists continuing to prescribe medication—even increasing dosages—despite evidence of [Richard’s] growing addiction and psychiatric breakdown.”

It appears to be shockingly easy to hoodwink some doctors into prescribing Adderall. Search “How do I get an Adderall prescription” online and a plethora of links prepare you to meet with a doctor, feign ADHD and walk out with a pile of Adderall.

Don’t feel comfortable with fraud at the doctor’s office? No problem. Ask around campus to see if someone has “study buddy” or “A-bombs” and illegally buy Adderall. There is a lucrative black market supplying Adderall to students who believe they can’t compete academically without it.

Unfortunately, the Adderall abuse epidemic is not limited to students. The Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program (JLAP) assists lawyers who are abusing or addicted to Adderall, and the abuse often began in law school. Some come to JLAP

psychotic and suicidal.

If all of the above information is not terrifying enough, some experts now claim Adderall is not a “smart drug” at all and that people only *think* they are doing better on tests when they actually are not.⁴

What is the path back from the Adderall-doping trap? At JLAP, the first step is to facilitate a reliable JLAP-approved ADHD assessment to determine whether the person has ADHD. If there is no ADHD present, the person is referred to a JLAP-approved facility to extricate him/her from the grip of Adderall abuse, safely ending its use and restoring the person’s mental health to allow competition at his/her natural best.

If you or someone you know needs help for Adderall abuse, make a confidential call to JLAP at (985)778-0571 or visit www.louisianajlap.com for more information.

FOOTNOTES

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), http://media.samhsa.gov/samhsaNewsletter/Volume_17_Number_3/Adderall.aspx.

2. ABC News Online, <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/MindMoodNews/adderall-psychosis-suicide-college-students-abuse-study-drug/story?id=12066619>.

3. *New York Times*, “Drowned in a Stream of Prescriptions,” www.nytimes.com/2013/02/03/us/concerns-about-adhd-practices-and-amphetamine-addiction.html?_r=0.

4. *The Daily Beast*, “Busting the Adderall Myth,” www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2010/12/21/adderall-concentration-benefits-in-doubt-new-study.html.

J.E. (Buddy) Stockwell is the executive director of the Louisiana Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program, Inc. (JLAP) and can be reached at (866)354-9334 or via email at LAP@louisianalap.com.

