’Drugs’ is one word that has a lot to do with semantics.
Welcome

This time we overdone it even ourselves. Between issues 21 – I hope you remember that it was an issue dedicated to our ...egos – and 22 it has been thirteen months. I don't even dare repeat it. But you have always to remember that the greatest aspect of this magazine is daily online and however poor it might sounds as an excuse it is true that the daily reality and the effect to be always constant has sometimes overwhelmed us.

But that doesn't mean that we left aside the thematic issue and it's significant since it is our chance to write and express ourselves in a more collective issues like this one which is about drugs. Of course like too many times we have said in the past we can capture the whole subject in the pages of this issue but we think that it is a beginning and a beginning is always the half of everything.

I will try to make no promises about the next issue like we did in the past but I can ...promise you on thing, that you are going to enjoy this issue and as a friend and part of the Ovi team often says, it will give you plenty food for thought.

Thanos Kalamidas
thanos@ovimagazine.com
'Drugs' is one word that has a lot to do with semantics. If I say that the last three years I went through a lot of drugs I'm afraid I will be misunderstood but saying drugs I meant the medicines I needed because of my health adventure. And the drugs I took didn't include heroin or cocaine but they did include morphine since it's still considered as one of the best painkillers in some cases.

You see choosing 'drugs' for our thematic issue we were very aware for the controversy it will cause – starting from its multiple meaning of the word – and I had my personal experience of dealing with drugs; some of them very powerful, the last two years, pampering from this experience I can say that I had the chance to deal with a lot of problems. I was given the wrong medicine and I was given a medicine that helped but caused a series of other problems some of them pretty serious and then I started taking drugs to help me recover from other drugs.

During my adventure I didn't know what was more painful the illness itself or the drugs they were giving me and after a while I had to deal with the drug industry and I mean it. It is natural when you suffer from something to try to research and investigate and then you naturally fell over all the marketing of the drugs industry. Every time I visited my doctor I had a new note with the name of another drug. The doctor decided to practise another kind of therapy, keep me away from internet and any research I was trying to do. You see the drug industry exploits the inner natural fear for death to promote any kind of drugs that a lot of times don't even do anything.

Then I discover another side of the drugs industry, a chemist who wanted to give me another drug instead of the one my doctor had prescribed with the argument that it is the same just cheaper! What he really meant is that it was similar but mainly it was manufactured from a different drug company his pharmacy had a better deal!

And then there were the friends who had some drugs idea with pills made from fish eyes or garlic and they cure everything including cancer, believing that a pill with fish eye vitamins was exactly what you need! I know that it sounds funny but somehow these anecdotes show how huge is the drug's industry and in how many ways enters our lives.

In this thematic issue as usual we try to investigate and approach the theme with different angles and sometimes in a very personal way. I think there is too much to be said about drugs, their users and the pushers and of course addictions. You see there are too many addictions regarding drugs and I'm not talking just about the known heroin and cocaine but even to prescribed drugs.

And then we have the drug cartels and the drug mongers and the drug dealers and of course justice that is able to free a drug dealer and lock for life a user! A society that pushes the users to the dark sides of the society ignoring the fact that these are patients and they need help and a state that cannot afford to help them because tanks are always more valuable than methadone programs. And then again after two years of adventure with a lot of drugs I am alive and that thanks to researchers that have improve medicine and drugs!
When the radical educational critic Ivan Illich says in *Deschooling Society* (1971) that the leading institutions of our society (educational and therapeutic as well as economic and military) are "either socially or psychologically 'addictive,'" he means that they feed on an insecurity which they themselves create. By keeping people away from real experience, school makes them dependent on an artificial, formal certification of their knowledge and talents. Schools were originally intended to teach people the things they would need to do in life, but this original aim (or rationale) has long since been lost in the curricular rigidity and petty power hierarchies of the school system. Children only know that they are supposed to learn because school, parents, and others say they should, and thus they don’t learn. Too many parents don’t care whether their child ever reads a book outside of school, comes up with an original idea, or learns to think things through for himself. Grades, and later degrees, are the only signs of performance they can recognize.

One result of this hollow concept of education was the PhD syndrome of the 1960s, which peaked at the height of the Vietnam War economy. Those who lived through that period will recall that within the typical middle-class community it was *de rigueur* for an able-minded student to attain an academic or equivalent professional degree. To cease one’s formal education after graduating from college was to incur the disapproval, even the contempt, of one’s closest associates. So external was the definition of education then current that the deviant risked being admonished, “Don’t you want to learn any more?” as if learning were only possible within the walls of some institution. As Illich says, “Once we have learned to need school, all our activities tend to take the shape of client relationships to other specialized institutions. Once the self-taught man or woman has been discredited, all non-professional activity is rendered suspect.”

What was most interesting about this phenomenon was that the hysteria often generated within families and groups of friends over this issue did not always concern the practical economic consequences of earning or not earning a degree. Rather, there seemed to be a basic emotional uneasiness—an “ontological insecurity,” if you will—about how one could define oneself subjectively without having an advanced degree. And when you talk about one’s needing something external to create an identity for oneself, you are talking about addiction, even if there is no syringe in sight.

As Illich says, schooling is a basic social experience which helps determine the character of our later interactions with our social and institutional environment. Even more basic are our family and social relationships. And the first thing that should strike our notice here is the excessive stress our society places on...
contacts altogether. With spectator sports and shallow, uninvolving aesthetic experiences occupying the leisure time of the bulk of the population, most people don’t develop interests that are sufficiently intense and self-motivated to be seen as being worth pursuing alone. Without denying that going to the movies with friends adds to the pleasure and value of the experience, we may well question the priorities of a society where it is considered unthinkable (except by a small minority) to go to the movies alone. It would seem that most of the people who go to the movies don’t do so out of a very strong intrinsic interest in the substance of the films they are seeing.

Individually, it would seem, we don’t enjoy or feel secure in our own company. That was pointed out by Pascal centuries ago at the beginning of modernity: we are unable to sit still in a chair and contemplate our lives for more than a few minutes. The need to have other people around all the time is part of what some psychologists have called “social dependency”—a need to cling to human “objects.” For many middle-class people, this form of dependency takes the place of the drug and alcohol habits that show up regularly in some lower-class cultures where family and friends are not such dependable sources of emotional gratification. If this social dependency expresses itself in well-established contacts with numerous friends, relatives, and acquaintances, it might be the basis of a rich and stable inner life. Instead we are predominantly grouped into nuclear families—husband, wife, and children, with no other deep or permanent connections—and consequently our heavy need for people is channeled into these few relationships. What often results, as in drug addiction, is outright dependency on a single object.

The way we are taught to view the opposite sex is, in effect, preparation for such dependency. Those of us who grow up in conventional modern Western households are trained from an early age to seek out one special person as a partner through life. This contributes to the stampede to early marriages, half of which will end in divorce. It also tends to cheapen all our other friendships, stunting them at the level of trivial acquaintanceships which will be discarded once the social object of our dreams appears. Beyond all else, this indoctrination strains incautiously our relations with the opposite sex. It dehumanizes half the people we meet and stands in the way of the natural mingling and person-to-person relating in which real experience is rooted. As someone remarked about the subject of one of our case studies in Love and Addiction, a male addicted to sexual conquests, “He talks about women as though they were different from people.” One begins to wonder if the concept of the extended family, still alive a century ago, was a better idea than that of the “nuclear family.”

When boy looks at girl, or girl looks at boy, he or she sees not a unique human individual, but someone to fill a role, a potential husband or wife. It is the same as thinking about school and envisioning not the experience of learning, but the comfort of social belonging that comes with being a member of an institution. One very positive thrust of the contemporary youth culture is its attempt to reduce the opposite sex to life size by encouraging easy-going, informal contact among young people of both sexes. But even where marriage is not the one overriding goal and couplings take on a freer, more modern appearance, we still can see the same kind of empty relationship that results from the desperate search for a partner: a relationship where it is the lover’s mere presence and constant devotion that counts, and not the opportunities for mutual learning and growth, emotional and otherwise, that the lover can offer.

Anything that we do can be addictive or not addictive; the key is in how and why we do it. Just as learning for the sake of grades and degrees keeps us from learning by doing, artificially
At the same time as we have difficulty achieving a secure sense of ourselves, the very chaos of today's society and the breakdown of ordered family life often don't allow us the externally structured security our training inclines us to seek. In this fluid setting a number of compensatory addictions have begun to flourish. One is overeating and the consequent problems of obesity. Another is psychotherapy. An unhealthy feature of many psychiatrist-client relationships is that the attention of both parties is directed inward, toward this artificially conceived relationship itself, rather than outward, toward helping the patient interact better with the rest of the world and thus outgrow the need for therapy. In this way, a continuing dependency is established. As Illich also points out, to a certain extent this cliental relationship obtains also with MD doctors.

The striking thing about all these addictions is that they are so readily interchangeable. An addiction is not sought as a vividly involving experience in itself (except sometimes in the early stages, as with the initial euphoria of heroin for the novice user), but as something in which to lose oneself—a protection against experience. It doesn’t matter much what that something is; at any given time one addiction may be more convenient or palatable than another. Adults of all ages find themselves cursing their cigarette habit when they are not overeating, and gaining weight rapidly when they are not smoking. Young people fall into and out of heavy involvements with drugs, psychiatrists, religious cults and movements, and all-consuming love affairs in rapid succession. The Children of God maintain a strict prohibition against drugs, since many converts to the faith are former users. Like a full-scale heroin habit, a total commitment to a religious sect negates everything a person has been and done and suffered and learned before “seeing the light.” Order is imposed by the strictures of the group, assurance and integration are sought through faith in an all-powerful God, and the threatening responsibility of self-assertion is evaded. Many youths undoubtedly join such groups in order to leave behind a life of confusion, failure, and self-doubt. Their communal experience amounts to a total restructuring of their cognitions along narrow, rigid lines.

A newly withdrawn addict finds himself at least temporarily facing an emotional and spiritual void. Nothing is really salient to him, because the web of interconnections with others and the range of satisfactions in life which people normally can fall back on have been eradicated or suppressed by the addiction, and they can’t be restored in an instant. Even when this normal psychic context is restored, it is hard to find a place in it for something which was formerly the addict’s whole world. This is why reformed alcoholics and drug addicts are often the most hard line opponents of chemical intoxication. It is also why some ex-lovers, to the amazement of those around them, display in the aftermath of a breakup a vindictive bitterness toward that person whom they felt they loved more than anyone in the world.

The relationship between addiction and the loss of personal bearing in an institutionalized society extends throughout the modern Western world. There, more than in other places in the world the physiological myth of drug dependence—the idea that the individual’s independent will is powerless before the inexorable action of a drug—is fervently propagated and maintained. It is worth pondering that the two decades which saw the largest increase in opium importation into the U.S. (1890-1910) began with the closing of the frontier, symbolic of the death of classic American individualism. (At around the same time, America was also in the throes of a series of state and nation-wide prohibitions of alcohol, culminating in the ratification of the 18th Amendment in 1919, and was taking up the cigarette habit in a large-scale way.)

Obviously, a malady so deeply embedded in the West’s cultural life cannot be cured by rehabilitating “drug abusers” any more than by locking them up. To be aware of the full extent of addiction in the Western world generally is to recognize that it cannot be eliminated except by a...
In the name of all the competitors I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, committing ourselves to a sport without doping and without drugs, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams.

It is over a year since the Beijing Olympic Games, but I have the feeling that certain Olympics will keep our interest for a long, long time. However, by interest I mean nothing positive. The only thing we can hope in is that this Olympics will be a lesson learned; but of course we have to wait and see. In the meantime things are still being unveiled from Sydney Olympics and we still have the Athens Olympics in our memories.

I presume we don’t know everything yet but enough has already come out of the Sidney Olympics and is all embarrassing not only for the ones who made the records with a little help from the drugs companies, not that there is suspicion that all the bright stars of the Olympic stadiums there were nothing more than bags full of drugs but the worst of all is what said from the people who provided the drugs, a drug is not traced is not illegal; and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) might did everything possible to trace all the drugs but the drug or in this case the doping industry was always one step in the front.

One step in the front in Syndey Olympics, one step in the front in Athens Olympics but how many kilometres in the front in Beijing Olympics? The Chinese Olympic committee refused WADA access to the Chinese athletes insisting to do all the tests alone but how much WADA could do anyway. In the name of the Chinese communist party and the glory of its leaders nothing counts not even human life and in this Olympics the regime proved it again and again. People wounded during the rehearsals of the opening ceremony and nobody cared, the Olympic committee had a reason putting an age limit for the athletes and obviously the Chinese violated constantly.

But let’s return to the drugs issue; some of the records we all celebrate so enthusiastically in the Olympics’ are just
superhuman and please don’t tell me that these people are doing hard work because it doesn’t matter how hard I work everyday world record I will never make in the hundred meters, the unbelievable thing is that the Olympic committee the very same that sponsors and support WADA and all these announcement for clean Olympics are the ones really who motivate athletes to get drugs. If you remember before the Beijing Olympics the biggest problem the Olympic committee had was how much they are going to sell the televised rights and how much profit they are going to make from the adverts. Apparently the way to attract people to watch the Olympic Games especially due to the difference of time that made everything more difficult for the European and American viewers who are the ones to get most of the advertising time was how many world records are going to succeed.

If you remember the same thing happened before the Syndey Olympics were the Olympic committee sure that she will brake all the records and collect a series of gold medals nearly replaced the Olympic flame with Marion Jones face. Eight years after Marion Jones inflamed the Olympic spirit admitting that she was doped all the way and all her Olympic medals were nothing more than a lie. Of course we never saw the Olympic committee returning the money they profited on her but they sponsored new names in the name of new records and more profits.

And talking about profits we must remember that athletes’ drugs industry is not about thousands of dollars but thousands of billions of dollars that include every interest you can imagine, from politics to chocolate industry. The states pretend that they don’t know because they want to see the name of their country in the list of the gold medals is good for the national pride and the smallest the country the better. Then adverts, athletes make millions from the adverts. China was so proud to compete Russia and America in the number of medals just like East Germany was a few years ago and China doesn’t matter how many of those athletes will die in the next few years.

The funds going to research for those drugs are most of the time far bigger than the ones that going for cancer or diabetes. Talking about diabetes, most of these drugs are covert to be anti-diabetes drugs amazingly even boycotting the research for the diabetes! This is a business much more profitable than heroin and much more dangerous because these athletes are becoming role models for young people who later when they try to imitate them they find out that the road to the medal goes through a lot of drugs and naturally they follow the same path.

Giving drugs to athletes is not only a crime is against any ethic but unfortunately the people who are oblige to stop it are the very same who motivate the athletes to take them and the real guilty behind all this story are the Olympic committee, a committee corrupted with money drugs and sex all the way, an embarrassment not only to the ancient Olympic spirit but to human values and the change should start from there. At the moment what remains is just to sit down and wait and see what superhuman the drugs industry has created for the London Olympics! —

Daddy, loves Mummy. He kicks her, punches her, shouts nasty words and makes her cry. And Daddy loves me. He burns me, slaps me, locks me in a cupboard and calls me a failure. I hate love.

STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NOW
My experience “with drugs” has quite much to do with a time, four years ago, when I was working with drug addicts.

I interviewed couples in which both partners had HIV and hepatitis, prostitutes with their arms burned and deformed by the use of syringes, who had abandoned all their five children and showed not a single sign of remorse, pimps and traffickers not manifesting any sort of guilty feelings either, lost kids who never knew what the most basic and primary signs of love and respect looked or felt like, besides basically all kinds of dysfunctional families, criminals and mentally ill people. Some would even arrive to the treatment centre, every week, inside police jail cars and with their handcuffs on.
That was when I learned that life is an ironic tragicomedy. Those people still had, of course, reasons to smile in spite of all the disasters in their lives, or the metadisaster that their life was in itself: an allegory for illness and failure, other times for cruelty or just disgrace, depending on the type of underlying personality and the reasons why they got inside the hole they were in, either if it implied suffering or not.

Pretty dark tunnels most of the times. As if life was a faded drawing or a kind of premature pall. Manipulative people very often (due to different reasons), you could feel sorry but should not show pity for them, as that was a door open to many misunderstandings, missed growth opportunities and even dangerous things for yourself. There is a part of humanity that, I will not say that it is lost, but it is not humane. Of course a human being that is not humane is lost as a human being, professionals know that some of them will never have treatment, they are just occasionally not brave enough to assume it. Life is a choice, many choices.

And then you realize that even the most apparently angelical person can cheat or try to use you just for the perverse pleasure of doing so or to attain a not so laudable goal, but the hardest thing is not to get paranoid about it and preserve your own innocence, oneness and ability to marvel with simple, beautiful, touching things, with life and nature, the most powerful phenomena. Truly altruistic human beings care more about the whole than themselves, they look at the big picture and don’t face material things or immediate self-pleasure as ends in themselves.

Most people tried drugs at least once in their lives. Some got addicted and some didn’t. The ones who did use them often to hide themselves from the world. Not to feel. Not to think. Not to feel. One can want to stop feeling for the most different reasons.

One can be more or less numb, more or less mentally, socially or professionally affected, or not to be at all.

Different personalities use different drugs. Some individuals try them all. In Finland, alcohol is the main problem, they say, which I think has to do with a certain kind of repressed personality, but also with a repressed collective identity, it is more than anything a collective or group symptom, a national symptom and symbol, a (negative) obligation of fidelity for some. And of course, it is a pretty good excuse to hide other drugs that Finns consume and traffic too, just like in any other country. Finns are not saints emulated by alcohol like some sort of national martyrs, and achieving the redemption of all their sins that way. Being drunk is no proper punishment, and punishment has nothing to do with assuming responsibilities, it is not constructive enough.

In the sixties and seventies, people had the attenuating excuse that they were not enough informed about the long-term consequences of drug use, the risk of premature dementia, the brain damages, the social and professional impairments, the health consequences. But that is not the case today, and when you are enough informed you become, more than ever, responsible for your own choices, even if your friends (bad friends anyway, and it is your responsibility to choose them too) can still drop something on your drink to get you in the same “mood”, like they often did in the sixties or seventies.

I know several people, and I experienced that once myself, who were cheated by friends and forced to try a drug without their knowledge, something which can turn into a truly terrifying experience, specially because you can at first not understand what is happening with you, and not every person reacts the same way to the same drug, some can have severe cardiac crisis, epileptic or asthma attacks. And who wants to be responsible for that?

The beneficial effects of some drugs are not here in question, but the freedom to try...
or not to try, and to choose what, when and where to try in case you want to. Teenagers and young adults are curious by nature, they want to experience different sensations and feelings, and test the limits of everything. So they become specially vulnerable. Some go deeper than others when they dive, and some even asphyxiate or drown.

Marijuana is used in medical treatments, LSD was used to heal victims of rape, morphine to cure malaria and relief pains, cocaine was applied with ophthalmic purposes, as anesthesia and as a respiratory system medication. Few know that heroin protects the neurons while cocaine destroys them and that heroin addicts tend to be more immature and have deeper primary emotional needs/deficits than cocaine ones, at least when they start using the drugs, although the heroin addiction has other very disastrous effects for health and even self-image not related with the mere physical health of the neurons. Even if the neurons are healthy from a neurophysiological point of view, thinking paths, for example, can be very distorted and immature.

Some addicts need role models they never had, sometimes the therapists have to behave like fathers or mothers or both, as the patients project those imagos heavily on them. Sometimes the health policies introduce a new drug prescribed by doctors to substitute the illegal one and keep the addicts going, more or less unhappy, more or less alive, more or less adapted, in a kind of limbo paid by the state and authorized by someone with a diploma. The social organization is not put in question that way, the quality of the relations, the social pressures and violence, the inequalities, nothing has to be changed.

Dignity, truthfulness, faithfulness, empathy, honesty, friendship, irony, trust, deep love, respect, humbleness, a clean conscience, sensibility, solidarity – those are the gold of the future. I would even dare to say that they are the virtual oil. They always were and will always be. The whole humanity needs to develop enough to recognize them as such. Act in order to foster them. And then, from that start point, all wealthiness sprouts, all wonderful, creative possibilities begin.

How can I play
hide & seek
when
21 children die
every minute?

Who’ll play football
with me when
21 friends die
every minute?

If I close my
eyes and
count
to a 100.
35 children
are dead.
There are thoughts of eternity in the human heart. The fight against time, via supplements, health and beauty aids is strong evidence that we desire to live long. However, the most overlooked and underestimated life-extender is right under our noses, literally. Humans themselves have the elixir of life. It is within their own heart.

All human beings require the tender touches, gentle strokes and the reassurance of unconditional love. These draw out pain, provide internal security, create a safe zone for creativity [learning], to reach their greatest potential. A scrapped knee, a dead goldfish, hurt feelings...all made a little better by the loving care of a mother. A child doesn’t care how much you know, only how much you care. And that unconditional love tells them how much you care. This is more likely to produce an adult that cares for others.

If the arch-type of unconditional love is mom, dad’s is the foundation. He plays rough and tumble, building trust in their father’s strength. Physical, hands-on activities like horseback rides add a great sense of security. Being a father I try not to take it personally that my children run to mom first, but I admit I am a bit jealous at times. However, I have grown comfortable with each of our tendencies and strengths. Rather than oppose each other, the opposites attract. This creates a nice balance for children.

Oxytocin is a hormone produced
by men and women after copulation. Immediately after, these hormone levels move to nearly the same levels, in both men and women. The same people exposed to this hormone but faced with a computer, did not show increased willingness to take risks, and specifically affected an individual’s willingness to accept social risks, arising through interpersonal interactions. It is hardly surprising that Oxytocin is also known as the “cuddle” hormone -- released by both men and women at sexual orgasm. It also causes a substantial increase in trusting behavior and causes a release of soothing and pain killing endorphins.

Love and intimacy are at the root of what makes us sick and what makes us well. If a new medication had the same impact, failure to prescribe it would be considered malpractice.

Connections with other people affect not only the quality of our lives but also our survival. Study after study find that people who feel lonely are many times more likely to get cardiovascular disease than those who have a strong sense of connection and community. I’m not aware of any other factor in medicine—not diet, not smoking, not exercise, not genetics, not drugs, not surgery—that has a greater impact on our quality of life, incidence of illness and premature death.

In one study at Yale, men and women who felt the most loved and supported had substantially less blockage in their coronary arteries. Similarly, researchers from Case Western Reserve University studied almost 10,000 married men and found that those who answered “yes” to this simple question—“Does your wife show you her love?”—had significantly less angina (chest pain). And when researchers at Duke surveyed men and women with heart disease, those who were single and lacked confidants were three times as likely to have died after five years. In all three studies, the protective effects of love were independent of other risk factors. Plus surgery patients experienced quicker recoveries.

Our pets are just like our own children. No doubt this is nearly universal. Good for us, since owning a pet lowers blood pressure, extends lifespan, boosts mood, provides humor, releases pain killing and mood elevating endorphins, and just plain provide companionship. They don’t care how bad things went at work. They just care you are home. It is not surprising that animals are excellent in reaching and connecting with people; mentally disabled, autistic children and even juvenile delinquents, whom many grew up angry, being themselves deprived of love. Animals are therapeutic to both patient and owner; horses, cats, dogs, birds. My shadow is my black cat, Midnight Black, the most affectionate I have ever seen and exactly what we needed since out “Reddy” of 20 years passed away this year.

Love is intangibles; feelings of security, acceptance, love, affection. Love is also tangible, such as actions that provide evidence of love. When doing the dishes, the laundry, changing the litter box [Midnight Blackie leaves evening brownies, but she’s worth it], leave little notes of appreciation, etc., love is made into an verb. It is what you do. The interesting thing is, the more you give away, the more you receive. You can never give too much away, nor receive too much.

There is a definite physiochemical connection between being loved and living longer, healthier lives, and that loss of love can lead to lose of life. After long lives together, a spouse will often follow their deceased mate in a relatively short time. There is a strong connection to love and health and number of years lived. It truly is a “wonder drug”. I have been abundantly inoculated for life. If Spock were 100% logical, he might say to the captain, “love long and prosper”. That is my hope for you.
Prescribed Mysteries

By Thanos Kalamidas

When you are diabetic everything changes in your life compared with the life of a normal or at least a non diabetic person and things are getting more complicate when been a diabetic you have to deal with something else equally serious and sometimes dangerously lethal like I had to deal with the last few years. Suddenly all your medication and all your treatment has to take seriously the element diabetes that can screw the whole therapy and that means that a lot of the medication you take is specially designed for diabetics.
But that is the one side, the other side is that despite the long existence of diabetes in human medical history, research and all the effects for curing it or at least helping the patients to a more normal life are intense and continue all the time they somehow still trying to ...understand. So there are new drugs constantly coming out or drugs that joined with other drugs can help you either with the side effects of the illness or with other problems and the side effects they have with diabetics.

Cancer and diabetes don’t make a good cocktail and while diabetes affects liver and heart, cancer’s cure demands a powerful body especially a good heart and a strong liver. Of course to strengthen things so they can focus on their main target - cancer in this case - they have to use drugs and aside to those drugs they gave to use painkillers and drugs that will help you cope with the treatment and the ...drugs! Chaos! That’s the only word I can use and I found my self taking two pills when wake up, two after a carefully measured breakfast and then another two after a snack, one more after lunch and then more after dinner and one before I go to sleep.

In an effect to help me my doctor gave me pills that are designed for diabetes but they were somehow new not much experimented with humans and as a result I started suffering from side effects of those pills. Of course living in the chaos of all this medication and the treatment I was not sure where the problems started and we escaped in the next natural or perhaps easy solution, cancer depression and more ...drugs! Never crossed the doctor’s mind that one of the medicines might had caused all the side problems and having the same time to deal with something more serious he had to put aside the ...mild depression despite my complains.

So my doctor in all good will to help me might have become the victim of a salesperson who wanted to increase her or his sales and equally his/hers income. Now that creates another suspicion, who tells me that increasing the salesperson’s income you don’t increase the doctor’s income as well! Sad? Probably. Real? Again ...might! By the way the drug I was prescribed was more expensive from all the three it replaced together which makes the suspicion more serious. By the way reading the papers that accompany the medicine there is a small note of the side effect I dealt with but it was the last one and not especially mentioned. Which makes you wander again, was my case making the little letters stronger and would other doctors warned for the side effect of the medication?

Later doing a small research I found out that the state had asked the doctors to prescribe cheaper medicines that make the same job since the state pays part of the medication. The next logical question, why this medicine is more expensive? Better materials? In a capitalist game like the one drug companies play there is no excuse to keep a drug more expensive than the competitor except if the materials are more expensive or ...better! Another mystery!

I hope you are not looking for answers here, I’m not a doctor I’m a patient looking for answers most of the time feeling defendless to all the questions I have and oddly most of them have to do with how medicine is practised and how doctors prescribe drugs and pharmacists sell them!
I WANT THE WORLD...
AND I...
WANT IT...
NOW!
AND I TRIED TO...
GET TO IT...
I SAID...
I THOUGHT...
I FOUND...
I FOUNDED...
NIRVANA, BUT I ONLY...
FOUND...
DEATH!!!!...
EVERY YEAR WE FIGHT TO END RACISM

And we will keep on fighting until we do.

a shrink wrapped addiction

My name is Asa and I am addicted to DVDs. I love the embossed covers of box sets. I adore removing the plastic shrink wrap from a new box and the smell of the plastic sends a shiver down my spine. There is nothing better than reorganising my collection alphabetically and then standing a few metres back to just marvel at the obscene number staring back at me. Some nights I really can’t decide what to watch so I just look at the boxes… they are my personal drug.

My film collecting habit began in 1997 after I managed to find a substitute for my teenage Star Trek addiction - I actually considered buying a Starfleet uniform. The format was VHS when I began collecting and I must have reached about 500 titles by the time DVD finally established itself on the market in 2002. From there the collection has spiralled almost out of control to over 1,500 titles, although when people ask how many DVDs I actually have it is hard to really answer because some boxes contain a bonus disc!

As bizarre as it may sound, there is method to the madness as I have a list of wanted DVDs that I always keep in my wallet and rarely deviate from. My ambition to own every Best Picture winner is slowly coming to fruition with a mere six out of the 81 left to get, but I have already begun another target which is films that also won the Best Director award (17 left to get). I only six Disney films short of completing that collection and some recent purchases allowed me to finally complete my Star Trek and Star Wars film sets.

My excuses? Well, I do watch them, often and more than once. I don’t drink and I don’t smoke; I don’t have any other expensive habits. A DVD is cheaper than going to the cinema with my wife and we can watch it in our underwear; well, at least I do. I really don’t buy crap… often. If I do then it is usually something that my wife would like to watch, but something is wrong when I am smuggling them home and sneaking them on to the shelf when she isn’t looking!

I can control myself for a week or so and I can look around the DVD section of a store without actually buying any, but when it all gets too much my self-control disintegrates and I find a stack of five to ten bouncing around the bottom of my rucksack. If you were to ask me outside the store what I had just bought then I would struggle to name them all, but damn I feel good, albeit a bit guilty.

Good news! I have just thought of another excuse and it is a great one too! I am investing in my daughters’ cultural education, so as they grow up they can be introduced to the classics of cinema and be taught about life through the power of film! What? I thought that was a pretty solid excuse!

I don’t know if my addiction wants to be cured because certain parts really are quite fun, plus it doesn’t hurt anybody - the only pain appears in the form of my bank statement and the occasional rolling of my wife’s eyes. It is a clean addiction that doesn’t damage the health of loved ones and doesn’t cause my personality to drastically switch, so what should I do? My daughter called me DVD Butcher last week, so perhaps it is finally time to stop buying DVDs… after all, there is something called Blu-Ray now…
They say that a former fishermen’s village of Montanita, and now something of a resort for backpackers from all over the world, situated within three hour’s ride from Guayaquil, is the hippest place in the whole of Ecuador.

It has a certain atmosphere indeed. Its several streets, surrounded by what looks like ramshackle houses, are literally chocked with sellers of crafts and a good half of these people do look like hippies. The ground level of every building is filled with small stores, bars and restaurants. The music, either salsa or Latino pop, blasts from every nock and cranny. Sometimes it feels like a crazy concoction of sounds that are trying to outbeat each other, making the warm air vibrate in your ears.

The people come here for fun. The drugs are incredibly common. Even waiters in local hangouts are moving with a characteristic slowness, being stoned for the most part of the day. I must admit that they still manage to bus tables with certain efficiency and this slow motion-slow speech flourish is somewhat characteristic for the whole town.
During the day, when you fry your skin on the beach, it is problematic to stay alone. Peddlers of beer, jewelry, sunglasses, ice cream, pottery, hammocks, hats, you name it, pass you by every ten minutes. Sometimes you simply wonder how they manage to carry all this stuff on their backs (say, a collection of bamboo hand made table lamps). You try to ignore them the best you can but sometimes you lower your guards and then you are engaged into a long conversation. The guy seats himself on sand and starts to pull out of his tattered bag the wares while you smile politely and shake your head. ‘Pottery? No? Maybe this? No? Drugs? No?’

Finally he pulls away. We watch him approaching a couple of American girls sitting nearby. In a few minutes he rolls two joints and hands them to the girls. They pay and flare up. Soon they lay on their backs and giggle.

Rodrigo is a twenty-five year old Argentinean artist who sells his hand made craft on the busiest street of Montanita. He is a married guy with three children and he and his family travel around South America, staying here and there for some time, then moving along. My wife wants to buy a necklace from him. The price is five dollars but we have no small change. Quickly he accepts four dollars – the only small banknotes we have on us now and nods happily when we promise him to bring the fifth dollar tomorrow (clearly he doesn’t believe we would but who cares? At least he sold us something.) When we bring the dollar the next evening, he is clearly astounded. He turns to his companion (there is a fair number of other artists sitting on pavement – all dressed in what I can describe as artsy rags and tells them excitedly something along the line ‘Hey look guys, they promised to bring me a remaining dollar the other day and looka here- they did it!’) His English is practically non-existent but his buddy speaks some. We invite them for a drink to a near booze stall. There are plenty of those, selling exotic cocktails, made right away before your own eyes. Soon we act like old friends. My wife, who teaches Sales Management in a prestigious business college, tries to sell their trinket to tourists, but scares the potential customers with her aggressive sales technique. Still, Rodrigo and the team are supportive and appreciative. “Hey, I learn new words: ‘wonderful craft’ ‘buy earrings for your girlfriend, mother, wife, sister’ I use it later!”

‘Hey guys,’ – We say, ‘How ‘bout sharing a bottle of something? We will buy it. What would you like?’

They grow visibly shy and do not know what to say – the whole situation sounds like a joke. You do not normally go around and invite strangers to share a bottle. Finally, everyone settles on rum (the cheapest booze available for sale, although I must note that South American rum is always of an excellent quality).

Rodrigo explains to me that they have to drop they wares to their place first. Then we can pop into a liquor store. We volunteer to
help them to carry their stuff. It turns out that Rodrigo and his wife, and a few of their friends live in a squat somewhere off the main street. The place is striking in terms of a picturesque poverty – it seems that several tenants (how many, I have no idea) share the toilet and washing basin situated outside of the building. The building itself looks like a shack, surrounded by similar structures. There’s no glass in any window, as far as I can see. The tattered walls still bear remnants of white paint. A dusty courtyard, or at least its part that is relatively free from smashed bricks and garbage, bears a volleyball net, tied between two poles. While guys and girls go into the room (we remain outside), my wife picks up a passing by kitten and cooes. I peer into an open door for a moment then move away. There is a big bed in a room, completed with a mosquito net, a single chair and a table. Everything looks extremely battered. The guy who speaks English steps out of the house, approaches us and says “we will be ready to go in a moment. Would you like some coke? We’ve got nice coke.” When we shake our heads and say “No thanks” he is terribly surprised. What kinds of tourists refuse a free line? But, oh well, perhaps it takes all kinds. We’ve already proved to be a bit weird couple. In a few minutes, we walk back to the town center, buy our booze, sit on a pavement and start drinking. Rodrigo takes occasional breaks to get up and dance with some girl. He is barefoot but his salsa skill is astounding. The music blasts from every booze stall. Sometimes you see nearly the whole street dancing under the open sky.

Well, isn’t it what the tropical romantic flare is all about?

We are invited to a beach party the next night but unfortunately we have to return to Guayaquil.

We leave Montanita the next day. “What a place”, – My wife laughs, “They are glad when you bring them a dollar but they are ready to share their coke with you.”

I believe Ecuador does not have a particular reputation of being a drug country but due to the close proximity of Columbia up north and Peru down south, the drugs are incredibly common here. So are drug related crimes. I still cannot get used to fool-in-wall food stores, which entrances are secured with heavy metal bars. When you buy something there, (cigarettes, beer…) you rarely come inside but pass your money through the bars in exchange for your purchases. It is especially difficult if you do not speak Spanish (I do not). The explanation as to what you need and how much it costs may take a while.

Dwellings of poor people, even in the city, lack window glass and have appearance of squats, but well-off houses are built like fortresses, surrounded by high walls with a broken glass and barbed wire on top, metal doors and bars on every window. The upper middle class lives in gated communities, also surrounded by walls, with heavily guarded entrances, and the filthy rich banana plantation owners in palaces surrounded by water.

The sheer number of heavily armed police, lined up in front and inside of every bank in downtown is astonishing. When you see it for a first time, you almost think that there has been a political takeover, for these guys, dressed in bulletproof vests and heavy helmets, holding huge machine guns and...
I head to the famous black market of Bahia for my monthly supply of cigarettes. The Bahia is essentially a contraband market where you can purchase anything without paying taxes and it takes several city blocks, and which, once you step inside, looks like a crazy maze of small stalls, built of corrugated metal. No one knows what legal status (if any) these small merchants hold but the market operates daily without fail. When the government tries to shut it down, apparently every few months, the streets of Guayaquil instantly get filled with angry protest demonstrations.

Luckily, I know my way around the narrow corridors, so in a few minutes I sit next to a cigarette stall and wait patiently while the guy who sells my favorite Colombian cigarettes (70 cents a pack!) runs somewhere to get my usual three cartoons. The next stall sells Spanish and Chilean wine, whiskey and more cigarettes. I watch in amazement as a boy of perhaps fourteen or thirteen, clearly out of his head, shaking from head to toe, tries to talk the stallholder into giving him some cigarettes. Is he on high or just plain crazy? Who knows? The boy does not look like anything I’ve ever seen. He is barefoot (judging by the state of his blackened feet he has been going without shoes for a long time, maybe since birth). He is terribly thin, with an unhealthy looking paunch that reminds you of a baby’s belly - it hands over the rim of his unbelievably rugged shorts like a sack, complete with a protruding belly button. He does not have anything remotely reminding me of t-shirt but he wears on his neck a bunchle of dirty rugs and ropes that serve him as a travel bag of sorts. I cannot see his face well: a wild mop of curly, cement colored hair, standing on his head like a ball, obscures his features entirely. He shakes and jumps from one foot to another, whining and yelping, then moves on.

There is a fair number of foreign teachers (from Europe and the US) who come to Ecuador especially for this purpose - to consume drugs. They work in various language or business schools but their free time is dedicated to this passion. Combined with other things, such as clubbing and trying to hook up local girls, it often proves to be a dangerous pastime. Hot-blooded local guys do not approve of gringos making passes at their girls. I heard a story of a teacher who was shot (not lethally) in a club on the third day of his stay in the country, and unfortunately, before his health insurance had kicked in. Seemly impossible, but never the less, many expats do manage to combine absolute carelessness with an acute paranoia. 'I never take a yellow cab', 'I never go downtown, south, to this barrio or to that barrio', 'I never shop here or there' and so on. When you tell these horror stories to the locals, they laugh or simply ask you 'Do you feel Guayaquil is really dangerous?' and I reply 'Well, I do not know. I have been to many places and I have met many people around here. I have been to the poor areas and I know people who live here. They all were hospitable and friendly. And I take only yellow cabs.'
A latest European survey, result of twenty five years research shown that the first contact with drugs happens in the sensitive age of fifteen and the predictions are not hopeful since in some places around Europe the age varies to fourteen and a half. We talk about an age where boys and girls are still kids balancing between electronic games and a mysterious adulthood.

The common excuse for all these kids is that with the help of the drugs they try to escape reality and another thing is that drugs addiction doesn’t recognize gender, wealth or race. Obviously disappointment has reached every side of our over-consuming society. Is not anymore the acid the youth of sixties used to get high since most of the kids nowadays are aware of the results, they have seen where the drugs lead and they have watched tens of films about them. And they are still following the same way.

One thing for sure drug addiction just like alcoholism is not something you can overcome alone and the patient needs help from many but most of all needs the understanding of the society and the state. A few years ago I was reading about a neighbourhood that was collecting signatures to reject to a centre for drug addicts to move in their area. But these people had already done the first step admitting their problem and trying to find ways to get out of it. The excuse of the people, normal everyday people with unfortunately very
poor information and even poorer understanding was that they didn’t want to see their nice neighbourhood becoming a place for junkies!

The question the last twenty years is not how it happened but how we can help and stop it or at least decrease it. The how is lost long time now somewhere between how people start smoking and how people are getting fat. Too many reasons and equally too many excuses. The thing now is to control it, and as I said before to decrease the phenomenon.

Methadone programs is an answer until methadone becomes a drug itself and a very lethal one especially after mixed with alcohol and however crazy it might sounds this cocktail has become the celebrities favourite. Talking about celebrities, here is another problem, celebrities using drugs. Among thousands of Thespian very few are using drugs and most often they are the ones who can barely excuse their Thespian identity still they are the ones that fill the pages of the tabloids with their addictions and brief visits to luxurious rehabs.

Instead of declaring war against countries that don’t agree with the president’s ideals nations had better declare war against the drug cartels that take thousands of young lives every single day, much more lives than any declared war. The Colombian cartels, the south Asian cartels, the north Asian cartels and I’m just saying the ones you read about too often, strong enough to control whole governments are the first ones that must be hit and the same time information. We live in the era where information is the most valuable cure to most problems. Think how much good and well spread information would have helped to stop the spread of HIV AIDS and think the same regarding drugs.

Smoking apparently is the best example. See how many the last twenty years the campaign against smoking has helped decreasing the number of smokers at least 35% internationally. A campaign mainly based in the information of the results and apparently in this case not fully proved but mainly based in statistics. In the case of drugs the number of deaths is enough prove, so why not use exactly the same thing?
Do they have deep booming voices packed with Barry White bass or squeak like a couple of helium addicts? Now you can hear for yourself...

**the Ovi Bad Boys show**

Every show online for your aural convenience
This week, breaking from my normal habit of ignoring anything outside the "(Post-)Election" or "U.S. Politics" categories of my personalized Google News homepage, I came across a particular headline that uncharacteristically detracted from my tunnel vision.

The San Francisco Chronicle captivated me with the words, "Experts urge wider use of brain-boosting drugs."

My close-mindedness and utter renunciation of any and all other-worldly happening -- everything outside of prospective talk of new administration heads and ongoing corruption scandals in Washington, D.C., -- keep me sheltered from most of the events that have occurred over past year and a half. (To use just one example: Were it not for its emergence of the short-lived
advancements in cognitive downloading, brain chips, robotic manufacturing. Whatever the case, it caught my attention, and for the first time since Obama announced his run for the presidency, I clicked outside the designated Google News areas.

According to the article, seven experts, mostly Ivy League professors — just two of whom with any direct ties to the pharmaceutical companies — had published an essay in the journal Nature about how we should all reconsider the negative connotations of “brain doping” or “brain steroids” and prepare to embrace the possibly earth-shaking discoveries still yet to arise from ongoing studies of the mental performing enhancing drugs such as Ritalin and Adderall.

The science talk delved into the positive effects of prescribed amphetamines on dopamine and serotonin levels in the brain -- processes that influence everything from behavior and cognition, motor activity, motivation and reward, sleep, mood, attention, and learning, in the latter case; and anger, aggression, body temperature, mood, sleep, human sexuality, appetite, and metabolism in the former. Of course, the article didn’t touch on the negative side effects of taking amphetamines, which are usually reserved for people with illnesses and diseases -- including diseases that in my view don’t deserve to be categorized as such -- like ADHD.

According to the Chronicle, the Nature article “is not a clarion call for widespread use of brain-boosting drugs, free of legal controls. Instead, the authors wanted to debunk arguments that drug enhancement is immoral per se, compared to other means of strengthening mental performance, such as a double espresso or an expensive tutor.”

That’s right. Brain drugs aren’t really any different than the “immoral” use of coffee before a study session or a tutor to aid you in the understanding of a complex subject. One expert advised, “Society shouldn’t reject them just because they’re pharmaceutical enhancements,” and yet another said that some students would take the drugs and before heading out to the court for a game of basketball with friends. (This, I assume, has something to do with the desire among college youth to gain that competitive edge during the grueling spelling requirements of HORSE.)

At the suggestion of widely administering these “medications,” one expert argued that, in order to even the playing field, professors could offer the pills to everyone before a test, essentially eliminating any issues with classism that are expected to surface when the more well-off students prove to be the only ones able to afford the drugs.

It sounds like a bad Stephen King novel, but this was reported, in all seriousness, and placed in the all-important Google News “Health” section. But if it also begs the question, asked repeatedly by scholars and transients alike, on a daily basis: What is this world coming to?

It’s already been established, and daily proving adequate at one-upping itself, that we live in a culture of quick fixes. For a cold, skip the tea with lemon. Instead, take Robitussin, Coricidin or Cepacol. If allergies, take Benadryl, Claritin, Dimetap, Clarinex or Allegra. If you can’t sleep, there’s Ambien or Lunesta. If you can’t stay awake, try a dose of NoDoz.

If you can’t perform sexually, or you can’t perform as vigorously as you did at 18, take Viagra. Or, if you perform too quickly and wish to de-sensitize your zealousness, there’s the cleverly named Climax Control Lubricant, by Durex.


And if you’re the kill-two-birds-with-one-stone-type, the hormone inhibitor Finasteride, according to a CNN article, reduces a man’s chances of developing prostate cancer by 25 percent and, at a lower dose, happens to be the same medication in the anti-baldness drug Propecia.

Powder Spray. Coprophobia? Try the Vanquish Fear & Anxiety Home Study CD Program and flush away those sphincter troubles for good.

For every malady there is a cure, and with this exclusive, limited-time offer and full-money-back satisfaction guarantee, you can return to normal for just eight payments of $19.95.

Of course, like everything, there’s the small print, which is small for a reason — it’s not worth reading. For the devout literary nuts out there who need no stimulants to energize the desire of knowledge, this is what it says: “Side effects Yet to Be Determined. A lot of possibilities, but nobody’s died so far -- except those few stupid college students who took too many (the definition of too many: Y2BD) while beer-bonging magnums of champagne at a Lambda Chi Omega live-out.”

And if you feel like you’ve cheated the system, if you experience shame or guilt -- which are different, just ask a pharmacist; if you wish you’d prepared instead of procrastinating and then popping a few performance enhancers to help cram before the big test; if you regret not choosing to weather the storm of your personal life’s struggles with the academic requirements of your future; if you, as is customary, completely forgot everything you “learned” while spinning on the prescription -- similar to the epiphanies you have with marijuana, LSD and mushrooms, except with a slightly less hallucinogenic effect -- then perhaps you should talk to a doctor to see if Prozac, Paxil or Electroconvulsive Shock Therapy is right for you, because you very well may be suffering from depression.

The ripple effect of this movement -- to moralize brain boosters -- is years off. But the pebble has been dropped, and the consequences, while yet to be determined, are likely to impact more than a few pharmaceutical companies’ profits. How it plays out depends on those who will subscribe to this fix-all philosophy. Whatever happened to that old “Just Say No” D.A.R.E. campaign?

If we’re constantly searching for ways to escape reality, to avoid hard work, to anesthetize the emotional ups and downs of life, to escape consequence and reward, then exactly what is the point of living?
There is rarely a news story that jumps out and waves its arms for attention, but I couldn’t fail to overlook YLE Online News’ headline “Finns Lose Millions in Online Poker to Foreign Firms Yearly”. Look again at the headline and see if something is slightly amiss… surely the headline should only read “Finns Lose Millions in Online Poker” with the story focusing on the gambling addiction, yet it actually is a complaint that income from domestic gambling could stay within the country.

The report, originally from the Finnish newspaper Keski-Uusimaa, states that Finns spend as much as 50 million euros annually on foreign online poker games and the newspaper has determined that if there were some tweaks to the betting law then domestic online poker would bring in several million euros in additional income, which could be used for public projects. Ahh yes, public projects, such as Gamblers Anonymous and the Samaritans, which rather flies in the face of rationality.

Why doesn’t the Finnish government just legalise prostitution and drugs if
they want some extra cash to throw at health and education? Where’s the harm? Think of the huge influx of extra tax they could throw at public services and public projects with a decent percentage rate on top of a blow job or a six ounce bag of “pre-cut” black tar heroin. Finland really could then have the best education system in the world and a health system to rival even Cuba, if Michael Moore’s Sicko is any guide.

In a recent telephone survey of 5,008 Finns conducted last spring, approximately 41% of the population gamble at least once a week, and approximately every tenth person participates in gambling activities several times a week. Approximately 1% of respondents estimated that they gambled to an extent which constituted a problem, which in proportion to the entire population is around 38,000 Finns.

There is further irony. Two-thirds of the respondents believed the Finland’s betting monopoly is a sound method of limiting the adverse effects of gambling and Finland’s government even justified the monopoly to the European Commission by saying it keeps gambling under control. Not only is the betting monopoly illegal according to European Commission laws, but the Finnish state also encourages gambling with plenty of advertising on television, radio and in the press.

According to the telephone survey, approximately 125,000 people had played online poker, which is 45,000 players more than indicated by a 2006 estimate commissioned by RAY (Finland’s Slot Machine Association), one of the three state-owned betting monopolies, so whose figures are we to believe? Currently RAY is the only one legally permitted to offer online poker, but thankfully they have yet to pursue this source of income. Note that word ‘income’ because it is the underlying objective of all casinos, bookmakers and gaming sites, and they wouldn’t be in business if it wasn’t profitable for them.

In the article Ilkka Juva, the communication director of the Finnish lottery company Veikkaus, states that up to two-thirds of the money spent on foreign online poker could be redirected to Finns, if Finland provided domestic online poker. I only hope that Finland’s Ministry of Social Affairs and Health discusses the potential damage to the population with the Ministry of Culture before any bill on betting law reform is passed, but I wouldn’t bet on it.
Curiosity is one of the main virtues of humanity and has served a lot of science and even more medical science. Oddly the same time curiosity has become one of the worst curses for humanity and in extent for science as well, you see curiosity and thirst for the result has often used in crossing the line on what is ethic and what is not and this is something we met often in medicine research or better in the research for understanding and heal.

But what is the force that leads this curiosity from the very old times? It has to do with pure curiosity or with the need to help the ones who need help, is it the need to extent life and makes it more comfortable or just fame and money? I suppose this varies depending on the character of the researcher and that why researchers, doctors and in extent the drugs industry is obliged willingly to follow if not obey a series of universal ethic rules.

In the past, unfortunately not so past, the medicine community has used methods and practises that embarrass humanity with top the ones that were practiced from doctors during the Nazi era in the concentration camps. Some of these experiments on drugs or methods were so monstrous that doctors refused to accept the results of those researches and it is admiring that attitude. The doctors that practised those experiments actually dismissed human life showing no respect and ignoring their oath.

Now coming to the rules must be followed, the research must be accepted from an independent commission that respects ethics and researchers are not part of this committee, the patients that participate in those experiments or practises must be fully aware of all the research and mainly the negative possibilities of the research. The researchers must announce any connection they might have with the drugs industry or any personal interest they might have in the result and of course all the parts involved in the funding of the research must be transparent to any investigation. During the experimenting period if any drug leaves the suspicion of endangering the patient the experiment must immediately terminated and finally all the results must be published so every expert has access to them, the results and the methods.

But then again another question comes, let’s say that in a research the researcher followed all the above does that prove that the result of the work was the expected? Many times in the history of medicine drugs that shown miracle results in the beginning proved lethal for number of patients? Or the other way around, drugs that in the beginning shown signs of danger proved to be savers? You see here we have another element, the drug companies, a very serious element that demands serious handling and this is were the role of the state becomes more critical. The drug’s companies. The researcher can be controlled and checked inside the medical community but it is impossible for the same to happen with the drug’s industry.

You see the only ethic drug companies accept is the one of the profit and they must learn to accept that the human factor and the well being of the humanity are more important to their profit. Well till now they have failed totally, while the number of HIV AIDS victims increases the same time the cost of the drugs for these victims’ increases. Viagra should be given only under prescription but CIA uses it as an exchange for information in Afghanistan and they are proud of it ignoring the dangers for the ones who take it and here we don’t mention the thousands of companies that selling it online since nearly all of us have gotten a mail with fantastic offers.

The same time we should not forget that the drug industry nowadays is the bigger funder of the drug research and researchers and where there is money, a lot of money as it comes with the drug industry it comes the political influence! And this is where every kind of ethic hits a brick wall. What must be done? The states must prove that the ethic drug is stronger than the corruption one and must control the drug industry in aim to fulfil their target, to help humanity!
How can I tell if my child is on drugs?

No yardstick, a combination of signs:

* Telling lies.
* Stealing.
* New friends - sometimes older.
* Keeping late hours.
* Problems at school - drop in grades, truancy.
* Loss of interest in work, school, sport and hobbies.
* Lack of concentration, memory loss, blackouts, hallucinations.
* Tiredness - abnormally sleepy or drowsy.
* Continuous coughs and chest infections - sniffles.
* Secrecy about activities, whereabouts and friends.
* Cravings for sweet things. Weight / appetite loss. Fatigue.
* Sensitive eyes, runny nose, sores and burns.
* Keeping arms covered.
* Rash around mouth.
* Chain smoking.
* Burns around mouth.
* Radical change in behaviour and personality.
* Mood swings. Paranoid.
* Unusual smells - odours on breath and clothes.

What can I do?

* Don’t panic. Respond in a calm and caring way.
* Remain in charge as parents.
* Confrontation will bring denial.
* Not when stoned - wait until they are down off “high”.
* Listening is a key area. Ask him / her about feelings. What is going on in their lives.
* School: any problem areas?
* Confront with evidence if possible.
* Quietly search bedroom, schoolbag without his / her knowledge. Markers, gas lighters, aero sols etc.
* Make an appointment with school principle. Ask if they have noticed a problem. Seek support - schools share a responsibility in the students.
* Don’t blame.
* Don’t allow yourself to be manipulated e.g. “I’ll stop if you don’t tell Dad, school etc.”
* Lay down reasonable and consistent rules for behaviour. Coming home at night, friends etc.
* Involve siblings and don’t neglect them or yourself.
* If in doubt seek help.

WARNING: You may need to impose a curfew and accompany to / from school.

Drugs are illegal because they are dangerous -
They are not dangerous because they are illegal.
“Only takes one tree to make 1,000 matches
Only takes one match to burn a thousand trees”