

PUBLIC HEALTH

Teen-Age Pill Kicks

Illegal drug peddlers are selling pep pills and sedative combinations to teen-agers. Criminal cases involving the drugs will be tried in Federal courts, Faye Marley reports.

► **BOOTLEG DRUG PEDDLERS** have a new racket in a repackaged combination of pep pills and sedatives, called "sets."

Two sedative pills followed by a pep pill, or "bennie," are said to act as a sex excitant, or aphrodisiac. Juvenile gangs are buying "sets" and sometimes following the pills with liquor to produce reportedly "grim results," with inhibitions disappearing.

Youth rioters at Ocean City, Md., last summer included gang members who habitually take the combination drugs, according to information received by Richard E. Williams, a district director of the Food and Drug Administration. The sedatives are secobarbital capsules and the pep pills are amphetamines, each sold legally only on prescription.

"Criminal cases have been filed in a Federal court," Mr. Williams told SCIENCE SERVICE, "in which several 'pushers' and at least one other person are suspected of involvement in the primary source of

supply. The cases are pending, with two of the pushers in jail on other charges, and others out on bail."

Mr. Williams said this combination of pills in a "set" is probably being sold all over the country, but was believed first uncovered in Baltimore. The problem has become so acute, Mr. Williams said, that some teen-agers are shoplifting or stealing in other ways to get money to buy the pills, which sell for two to three dollars, or as much as the youngsters will pay.

Mr. Williams does not know how the drugs are originally procured, but bootleggers obviously are diverting the legitimately bottled pills and repackaging them in sets. They are put into envelopes for sale.

"We have no reason to suspect legitimate druggists of cooperating in this new method of preying on the morals of young people," Mr. Williams said. "Until the cases are heard in Federal court we can-

not reveal any names for fear this would be prejudicial."

There are legitimate combinations of sedatives and mood-elevating pills used for psychiatric patients who need to relax. But they are properly balanced prescription drugs. Many drug companies manufacture both the kind of sedative used in "sets" and amphetamines.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Japanese Children Excel Iowans in Physical Tests

► **JAPANESE BOYS** and girls scored higher than taller, heavier Iowa youths in six out of seven physical fitness tests, a State University of Iowa study has shown. The children tested were nine to 12 years old.

Only in sit-ups did the Iowans excel. The Japanese students did better in pull-ups, bent-arm hang, the dash, forward bend, standing broad jump and shuttle run.

Two Japanese, Miss Namiko Ikeda, a candidate for the Ph.D. degree in women's physical education, and Dr. Tetsuo Neshizuka, who received his Ph.D. degree at State University of Iowa in 1956, cooperated in the study. Dr. Neshizuka, who is now teaching at Tokyo Metropolitan University, gave tests for Miss Ikeda to 395 Tokyo grade pupils from an area outside Tokyo, where farmers, fishermen and businessmen live.

Miss Ikeda tested 350 students in schools near Iowa City, and reported the combined tests in partial fulfillment of her degree. The Japanese pupils were in larger classes with less desirable facilities than the corresponding Iowa groups, but Miss Ikeda's study indicated that they had more chances to become active through physical education.

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ZOOLOGY

Keeps Tabs on Animals

► **THIMBLE-SIZED** radio transmitters weighing less than an ounce have been developed for studying the comings and goings of wild animals. They also could be used to keep track of small children.

Codevelopers William Cochran of the University of Illinois and Rexford D. Lord Jr. of the Illinois State Natural History Survey demonstrated the transmitters to the American Society of Mammalogists in Urbana, Ill. A built-in battery in each transmitter keeps it going for as long as four months.

It can be attached to rabbits, raccoons, opossums, pheasants and mallard ducks with a simple, lightweight harness containing the transmitter's antenna. A direction-finding radio then traces the animal's movements day or night. On ground-moving animals the signal can be picked up from half a mile away. On ducks flying half a mile high it can be tracked for 60 miles.

Studies with the transmitter already have revealed that a rabbit wakes up about five o'clock in the afternoon and puts in a 14-hour night of feeding. Within a single night, a rabbit confines his feeding to a two-acre area. About seven o'clock in the morning, the signal from the transmitter stops coming from different directions, and the scientist knows that the rabbit has hidden himself and gone to bed for the day.

Each transmitter operates on a different frequency so that scientists can keep track of several animals at one time. At present

the signal is a steady tone, but Mr. Cochran plans to replace this with a beep tone, which can be used to relay information about the heart or respiration rates of the animal.

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WIRED RABBIT TO BE TRACKED BY RADIO