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Night Club Hallucinogen, the Best Drug Against Depression

Ketamine is much faster than Prozac

Modern life and the rapid pace at which it evolves have created many unadapted individuals. At the moment, over 121 million people worldwide experience severe depression, which is also the main cause of suicide. Annually, more people commit suicide than are killed in wars, terrorist attacks and homicides. Worldwide, suicide levels have boomed by 60 % since WW II, reaching about 28 male and 7 female suicides per 100 000 people; even more, the highest increase has been signaled in developing countries. The solution to this issue could be a horse tranquilizer, battlefield anesthetic and nightclub hallucinogenic called 'Special K' or Ketamine, known to induce feelings of detachment, as signaled by a new research published in the Archives of General Psychiatry. Ketamine seemed to balance activity in the orbitofrontal cortex, found above the eyes, which displayed increased activity in depressed people. "The area is believed to be responsible for feelings of guilt, dread, apprehension and physical reactions such as a racing heart. The study results have given us a completely novel way of treating depression and a new avenue of understanding depression," said lead author Bill Deakin, a neuroscientist at the University of Manchester. 33 healthy male subjects received ketamine intravenously and minute-by-minute brain scans were taken in order to monitor the effect of the drug on the brain. This was observed very rapidly. "The results were surprising because the researchers had expected that the ketamine would instead affect the part of the brain that controls psychosis. There was some activity there, but more striking was the switching off of the depression center," said Deakin. Earlier investigation had revealed that ketamine acted on symptoms of depression in just 24 hours, compared to a month in the case of Prozac, but the precise reason for that is not yet known. "The latest findings give researchers a specific target to design new drugs and offer hope for the many people who do not respond to Prozac or other standard medicines," Deakin explained. Prozac (commercialized as fluoxetine) belongs to a class of chemicals called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) - depression is caused by low levels of the so-called "happiness hormone", serotonin. "Many people don't respond to treatment. This offers a potential way of treating them," said Deakin. But there is a bad issue caused by SSRIs as well. SSRIs, even if they do increase the feeling of happiness, decrease libido and cause trouble in achieving orgasm, both in men and women. SSRIs cause impotence in at least 73 % of the cases.