Barbiturates, Benzodiazepines and other Sedatives/Hypnotics

Although Chloral Hydrate was first discovered in 1832, its sedative properties were not published until 1869. It became the staple sedative of the day and was used recreationally as well as being miss-prescribed.

Fast forward 1902 and the sedative properties of barbituric acid are discovered. In 1904, Bayer commercialise Veronal, the first barbiturate. Barbiturates have been used for lethal injection in the US as well as a ‘truth serum’ although the latter has been discredited.

By the 1950’s however, the behavioural disturbances and potential for addiction are recognised. Countless celebrities have used barbiturates, in some cases resulting in their premature death, including Marilyn Monroe, Judy Garland, Kenneth Williams, Edie Sedgwick to name a few.

The early 1950’s also saw the discovery of methaqualone. US pharma Roher manufacture the drug under the brand name Quaaludes. In Europe, Roussel pharma add an antihistamine and brand it Mandrax. Quaaludes became widely abused in the US. By the mid 1960’s they were the most prescribed sedatives.

By 1955, a Polish/ American chemist discovers Chlordiazepoxide (Librium), the first Benzodiazepine. At first, benzodiazepines are thought to be a safe alternative to barbiturates. However, years down the line, their addictive properties are revealed.

Some items in this collection are not barbiturates or benzodiazepines. However, they all share their sedative properties if abused: the antihistamine Promethazine, the antidepressants Amitryptiline and Mirtazapine and some anti-psychotics.

In this section, you will find examples of various barbiturates: Amobarbital, Phenobarbital, Pentobarbital, Butabarbital etc. Some benzodiazepines: Diazepam, Nitrazipam, Temazepam, Lorazepam etc.

Some Z drugs such as: Zolpidem and Zopiclone.

Not to forget the powerful Chloral hydrate, some anti-histamine and anti-depressants.

Items wanted by the author:

- Tuinal and Diconal tablets
- Mandrax bottle