Secobarbital Encyclopedia Article

Secobarbital

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Secobarbital

Secobarbital, prescribed and sold as Seconal, is a short-acting BARBITURATE used principally as a SEDATIVE-HYPNOTIC drug but occasionally as a preanesthetic agent. It is a nonspecific central nervous system (CNS) depressant and greatly impairs the mental and/or physical abilities necessary for the safe operation of automobiles and complex machinery.

Figure 1
Secobarbital

Before the introduction of the BENZODIAZEPINES, it was the drug most commonly used to treat insomnia. Prolonged or inappropriate use of secobarbital can produce TOLERANCE AND PHYSICAL DEPENDENCE. If high doses have been used, abrupt cessation can result in severe WITHDRAWAL symptoms that include convulsions. Secobarbital is more likely to be abused than benzodiazepines and appears to produce greater euphoria in certain individuals than would a comparable sedative dose of a benzodiazepine. Consequently, it is classified as a Schedule II class drug in the CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT, which indicates that although it is acceptable for clinical use, it is considered to have a high abuse potential. As with other barbiturates, it should never be combined with another CNS depressant because respiratory depression can occur.

See Also

Abuse Liability of Drugs: Testing in Humans; Drug Interaction and the Brain; Drug Interactions and Alcohol)

Bibliography

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