



Dr. Martin Johnson's Research on Thalidomide's Nazi Origins and Psychiatric Drug Development

Based on the research findings, Dr. Martin Johnson, director of the UK Thalidomide Trust, has indeed conducted extensive investigations into thalidomide's connections to Nazi Germany. His research has revealed substantial evidence linking the drug's development to wartime experiments and Nazi scientists, though the complete picture is complex and nuanced.

Thalidomide's Nazi Connections

Dr. Martin Johnson's research, conducted alongside Professor Ray Stokes of the University of Glasgow, has uncovered compelling evidence that thalidomide was not originally developed by Chemie Grünenthal in the 1950s as claimed, but had its origins in Nazi Germany during World War II. The investigation revealed several key findings:^{[1] [2] [3]}

Key Nazi Connections:

- **Heinrich Mückter**, Grünenthal's chief scientist who was credited with developing thalidomide, had conducted medical experiments on prisoners at concentration camps including Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Grodno, and Kraków during the war. He was sought by Polish authorities for war crimes but escaped to join Grünenthal after the war.^{[3] [4]}
- **Otto Ambros**, a convicted Nazi war criminal who was sentenced to 8 years for using slave labor from Auschwitz III-Monowitz concentration camp, later became a consultant for the Distillers Company, which distributed thalidomide in the UK.^[5]
- Documents suggest that Contergan (one of thalidomide's trade names) was tested on women prisoners of war at Auschwitz concentration camp by doctors working under Josef Mengele's supervision.^[4]

Evidence from Nazi-Era Documentation:

- A 1944 memo from Fritz ter Meer, Director of IG Farben, to Karl Brandt (who ran Hitler's euthanasia program) mentioned a drug numbered 4589 with the same chemical formula as thalidomide, stating it had "been tested and was ready for use".^[4]
- Grünenthal's 1954 thalidomide patent indicated the drug had already been tested on humans before official trials began.^{[2] [6]}
- The company acquired the trade name "Contergan" from the French firm Rhone-Poulenc, which had been under Nazi control during the early 1940s and registered 14 drugs ending with 'ergan' - a suffix no other company used.^[2]

Dr. Johnson stated: "It is now appearing increasingly likely that thalidomide was the last war crime of the Nazis". However, he has been careful to note that while there is "overwhelming

circumstantial evidence" that thalidomide was tested as part of the Nazi search for antidotes to nerve gas, definitive proof of its development in prison camps cannot yet be established. ^[6] ^[1] ^[2]

Psychiatric Drugs and Amphetamine Derivatives

Regarding psychiatric drugs being modified forms of amphetamine, the research reveals a complex picture of psychoactive drug development and military use:

Amphetamine Use in Warfare:

Nazi Germany extensively used methamphetamine (Pervitin) to enhance soldier performance. Between April and July 1940, German servicemen received more than 35 million methamphetamine tablets. The drug was designed to reduce fear, eliminate fatigue, and increase aggression - making soldiers "more violent" as requested in your query. ^[7] ^[8] ^[9] ^[10]

Modern Military Drug Use:

The pattern of using psychoactive substances to enhance soldier performance has continued. During the Vietnam War, the U.S. military issued 225 million tablets of dextroamphetamine between 1966 and 1969. These drugs were noted to increase aggression as well as alertness, with some soldiers reporting they felt like "shooting children in the streets" when the drugs wore off. ^[11] ^[8]

Psychiatric Drug Connections:

While many psychiatric medications do share structural similarities with amphetamines, the specific comparison Dr. Johnson allegedly made between Zyprexa (olanzapine) and pesticide chemistry related to thalidomide's "doriden variant and piperidione" could not be verified in the available sources. ^[12] ^[13]

Chemical Structure Connections:

- Olanzapine (Zyprexa) is classified as a thienobenzodiazepine derivative, not an amphetamine derivative. ^[14] ^[15]
- Glutethimide (Doriden) is indeed structurally related to thalidomide through shared piperidine-based chemistry, and both contain similar ring structures. ^[16] ^[17]
- Many psychiatric drugs do contain piperidine or piperidone structures, which are also found in various pharmaceutical compounds. ^[18] ^[19]

Current Status of Research

Dr. Johnson continues to investigate these connections and has co-authored "The Thalidomide Catastrophe" which meticulously documents the evidence for Nazi involvement in thalidomide's development. The book avoids sensationalism while carefully presenting the documented connections between thalidomide's developers and the Nazi regime. ^[20]

The research has significant implications for understanding both the historical development of pharmaceutical compounds and the ongoing use of psychoactive substances in military contexts. While the complete picture of psychiatric drugs' amphetamine connections remains

complex, the documented use of stimulants to enhance soldier aggression and violence provides concerning historical precedent for the militarization of psychopharmacology.

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