

COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS

Fourth session

THE PLACING OF ACETYLDIHYDROCODEINE  
UNDER INTERNATIONAL CONTROL

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Members of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs the texts of a notification by the Government of Belgium concerning Acetyldihydrocodeine, transmitted under Article 11, paragraph 2, of the Convention of 13 July 1931 for Limiting the Manufacture and Regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the Protocol of 11 December 1946; of the opinion expressed by the World Health Organization concerning this notification; and of the letter in which the Secretary-General brought the notification to the attention of the Government of Belgium.

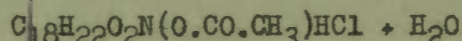
On 1 June 1948, the Secretary-General received the following communication (No. K/O.46.6/48/2236 dated 26 May 1948) from the Belgian Government:

"I have the honour to inform you that the S.A. Bios-Etablissements Coutelier Freres, 37 rue de Potter, Brussels, has begun, under the supervision of the Narcotics Service of the Ministry of Public Health and Family, the manufacture of ..... acetyldihydrocodeine ....

"This notification is made ..... in accordance with Article 11, paragraph 2, of the Convention for limiting the Manufacture and regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs of 13 July 1931.

.....  
"The hydrochloride of acetyldihydrocodeine (trade name acetylcodeine) is a synthetic derivative of codeine recently made practicable by the research service of the S.A. Produits Bios. It is put out in the form of a white crystalline powder with a bitter taste, very soluble in water and in alcohol.

"The substance is defined by the chemical formula:



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The melting point of the base is 120°C.

"The Bios Company states that the product is a substitute for and a derivative of codeine and dihydrocodeine, that it is essentially a calmative and a sedative, and that it has over codeine the advantage of being less toxic and much more active. Comparable to dihydrocodeine from the point of view of reduced toxicity and sedative effect, it does not have the disadvantage of the latter in acting on the intestines and provoking constipation. Acetylcodone is presented as not having any convulsive action. An ideal calmative for coughs, it permits restoring sleep without leaving the least heaviness on awakening. It is especially recommended as a sedative for children with whooping cough, its feeble toxicity permitting its administration to young infants.

"The Bios Company recommends the following dosage:

Adults - 2 to 6 compressed tablets of 0.01 per day

Children - 0.001 per year of age, repeated 2 to 4 times per day.

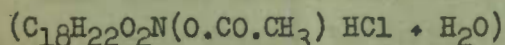
"The introduction into Belgian pharmaceutical commerce of acetyldihydrocodeine involves the estimation of the consumption of this product for 1948 and 1949, as well as an estimate of the codeine necessary for its manufacture. I am therefore sending to the President of the Permanent Central Opium Board, at Geneva, a supplementary estimate for 1948 and an estimate for 1949 of the requirements of Belgium in regard to acetyldihydrocodeine."

In accordance with Article 11, paragraph 2, of the 1931 Convention, the Secretary-General communicated the Belgian notification to the other Parties to the Convention and to the World Health Organization.

The Expert Committee of the World Health Organization, having examined this notification, at its first session held between 24 and 29 January 1949, expressed the following opinion:

"3. Notification received from the Belgian Government regarding acetyldihydrocodeine hydrochloride (trade name: Acetylcodone)

"The Committee has considered a notification received from the Belgian Government with respect to acetyldihydrocodeine



"The Committee has no specific information on the habit-forming property of acetyldihydrocodeine, but is of the opinion that this substance is convertible to dihydrocodeine which, in turn, is convertible to dihydromorphine, a habit-forming drug. The statement with respect to conversion to a habit-forming drug applies equally



to other esters of dihydrocodeine and their salts, and also to dihydrocodeine and its salts.

"The Committee

"RECOMMENDS to the Executive Board that the Committee's opinion concerning dihydrocodeine, its esters and their salts, should be communicated to the Secretary-General of the United Nations."

The Director-General of the World Health Organization addressed a communication, No. 463-3-1 dated 23 February 1949, to the Director of the Division of Narcotic Drugs forwarding a copy of the report (WHO/HFD/9 of 10 February 1949) of its Expert Committee and stating that the Executive Council of the World Health Organization had adopted the above-mentioned opinion of its Expert Committee.

The above mentioned decision of the World Health Organization was made known to the Government of Belgium by a letter (SOA9/8/08/BC of 7 April 1949) reading as follows:

Translated from French

"I have the honour to refer to letter No. SOA/9/8/08/VP of 6 August 1948, in which I informed you, inter alia, that the Secretary-General had to transmit your notification concerning the production of hydrochloride of acetyldihydrocodeine to the World Health Organization in order that the latter might make the investigation provided for in Article 11, paragraph 3, of the 1931 Convention.

"The Expert Committee on Habit-Forming Drugs appointed by the World Health Organization met at Geneva from 24 to 29 January 1949 and examined your Government's notification. The report of the Committee of Experts was adopted by the Executive Council of the WHO at its third session and the text thereof has been communicated to me by the Director-General.

"Paragraph 3 of the report deals with hydrochloride of acetyldihydrocodeine and I venture to communicate it to you herewith:

[The opinion of the Committee of Experts as quoted above].

"The opinion expressed by the Committee of Experts will be communicated to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fourth session, which is to be held at New York in May 1949.

"The attention of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs will be drawn to paragraph 3 of your letter of 26 May 1948, No. K/O.46.6/48/2236, notifying the Secretary-General of the Belgian Government's decision to place acetyldihydrocodeine in the

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category of drugs falling under Group II in article 1 of the 1931 Convention. The Secretary-General will consider this decision as operative until such time as the competent services of the United Nations may decide that the substance should be placed in the category of products belonging to Group I.

"Any observations you may care to send the Secretary-General regarding this letter will be submitted to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fourth session."

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