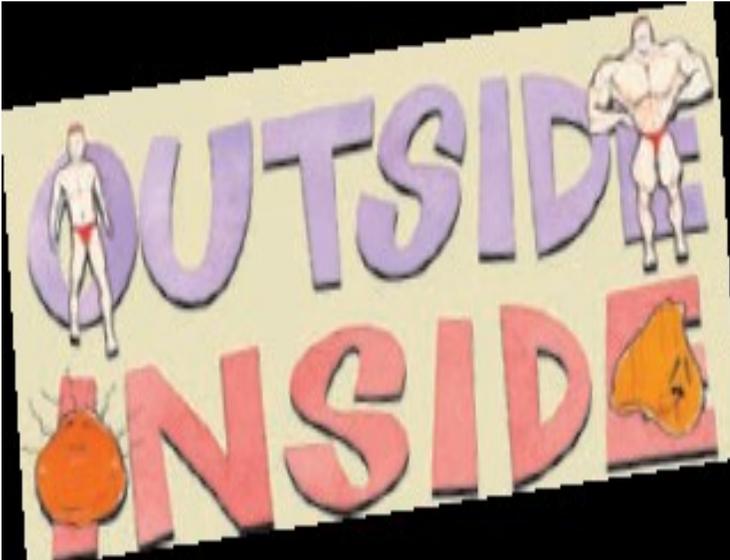




DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER JULY 2012



Do Anabolic Steroids Really Make the Body Stronger?

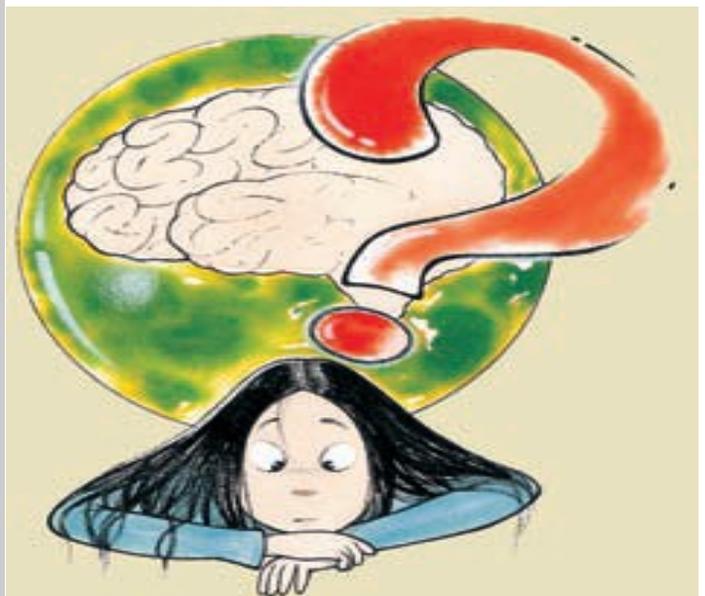


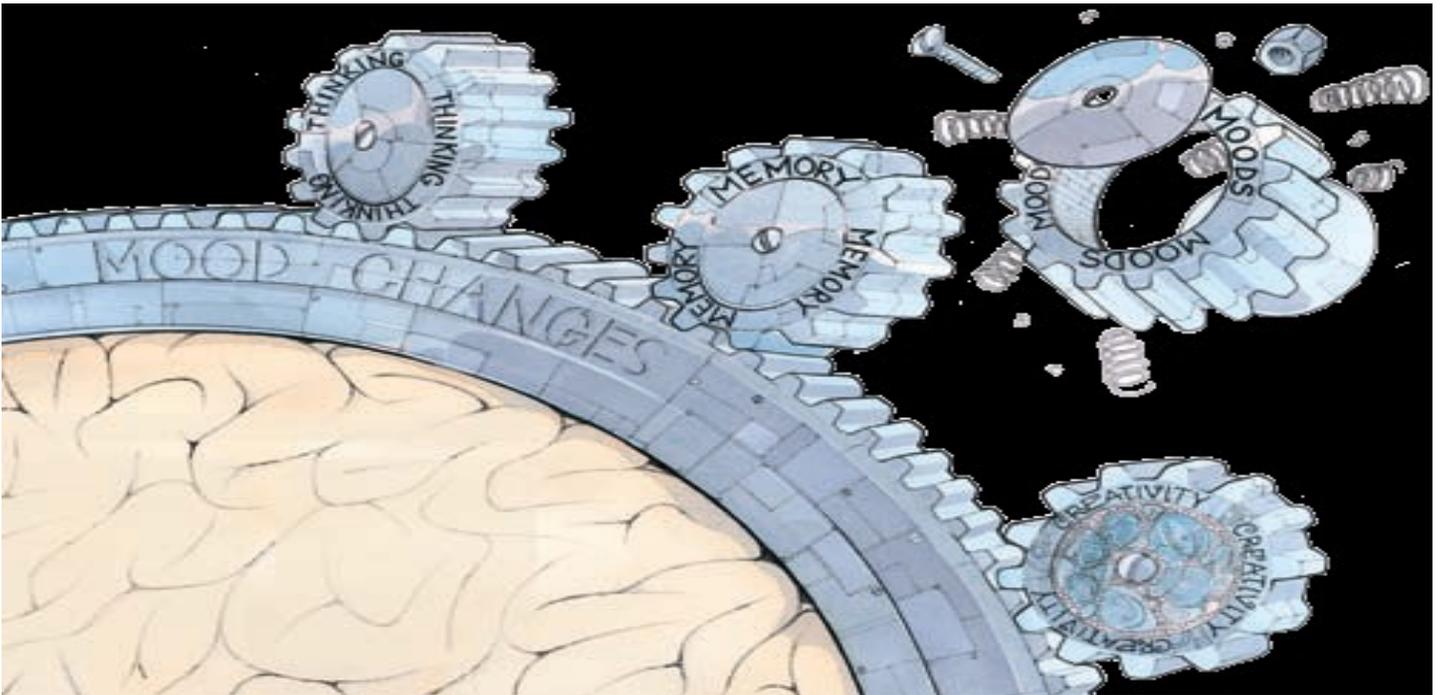
You may have heard that some athletes use anabolic steroids to gain size and strength. Maybe you've even seen an anabolic steroid user develop bigger muscles over time. But while anabolic steroids can make some people look stronger on the outside, they may create weaknesses on the inside.

For example, anabolic steroids are bad for the heart—they can increase fat deposits in blood vessels, which can cause heart attacks and strokes. They may also damage the liver. Steroids can halt bone growth—which means that a teenage steroid user may not grow to his/her full adult height.

Anabolic Steroids Affect the Brain

Scientists are still learning about how anabolic steroids affect the brain, and in turn, behavior. Research has shown that anabolic steroids may trigger aggressive behavior in some people. This means that someone who abuses anabolic steroids may act mean to people they're normally nice to, like friends and family, and they may even start fights. Some outbursts can be so severe they have become known in the media as "roid rages." And when a steroid abuser stops using the drugs, they can become depressed, even suicidal. Researchers think that some of the changes in behavior may be caused by hormonal changes that are caused by steroids, but there is still a lot that is not known.





Anabolic Steroids Can Confuse the Brain and Body

Your body's testosterone production is controlled by a group of nerve cells at the base of the brain, called the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus also does a lot of other things. It helps control appetite, blood pressure, moods, and reproductive ability. Anabolic steroids can change the messages the hypothalamus sends to the body. This can disrupt normal hormone function. In guys, anabolic steroids can interfere with the normal production of testosterone. They can also act directly on the testes and cause them to shrink. This can result in a lower sperm count. They can also cause an irreversible loss of scalp hair. In girls, anabolic steroids can cause a loss of the monthly period by acting on both the hypothalamus and reproductive organs. They can also cause loss of scalp hair, growth of body and facial hair, and deepening of the voice. These changes can also be irreversible.

Can Steroid Abuse Be Fatal?

In some rare cases, yes. When steroids enter the body, they go to different organs and muscles. Steroids are not friendly to the heart. In rare cases, steroid abuse can create a situation where the body may be susceptible to heart attacks and strokes, which can be fatal. Here's how: Steroid use can lead to a condition called atherosclerosis, which causes fat deposits inside arteries to disrupt blood flow. When blood flow to the heart is blocked, a heart attack can occur. If blood flow to the brain is blocked, a stroke can result.

