

## CASE REPORT

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# Self-amputation of penis and tongue after use of Angel's Trumpet

Received: 20 February 2006 / Accepted: 2 March 2006 / Published online: 16 June 2006

**Abstract** This case report draws attention to the dramatic consequences of the consumption of Angel's Trumpet. Angel's Trumpet contains alkaloids (especially scopolamine, as well as hyoscyamine, atropine and other alkaloids) in a relatively high concentration. When intoxicated with Angel's Trumpet, patients can suffer hallucinations, motoric restlessness, overtalkativeness, convulsive sobbing and sexual excitement, as well as aggressive and autoaggressive behaviour. Somatic symptoms are tachycardia, mydriasis, hypertonia, respiratory disturbances and vomiting, as well as a potentially life-threatening anticholinerg syndrome. In this paper, we report on a young man who amputated his penis and his tongue after having consumed Angel's Trumpet tea, illustrating that consuming this beautiful flower with the name of an angel and the poison of the devil can be very dangerous.

**Key words** Angel's Trumpet · organic psychosis · self-amputation · biogenic drugs · alkaloid intoxication

## Introduction

It has been reported that young people increasingly consume so called "natural drugs", which are also known as "biogenic drugs" [1–3]. Young people consider such "natural drugs" to be harmless; but the opposite is true, as we demonstrate by reporting on the dramatic consequences of a singular consumption of Angel's Trumpet by a young man, who, after having consumed the Angel's Trumpet, went on to amputate his penis and tongue during the resulting bout of delirium.

## Angel's Trumpet

The scientific name for Angel's Trumpet is *Datura sanguinea*, and it is also known as *Brugmansia*. It belongs to the Solanaceae (nightshade) family. Angel's Trumpet has its origins in South America, but is now widely spread throughout Europe as an ornament for gardens. The shrubs or trees can reach a height of up to 5 m and have trumpet-shaped, up to 30 cm-long flowers, which have given the plant its name. The whole plant is very poisonous, especially the roots and the seeds. Angel's Trumpet contains alkaloids in a relatively high concentration, especially scopolamine (up to 80%), as well as hyoscyamine, atropine and other alkaloids. About 0.3 g of the plant are considered to be toxic. Drug consumers normally dry the leaves and flowers and then smoke them or brew a tea from them.

When intoxicated with Angel's Trumpet, patients can suffer hallucinations, especially optical and scenic ones [4]. They can show motoric restlessness, overtalkativeness, convulsive sobbing and sexual excitement, as well as aggressive and autoaggressive behaviour. Often patients report intense dream experiences. Somatic symptoms, especially after having ingested higher doses, could be a potentially life-threatening anticholinerg syndrome, as well as

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tachycardia arrhythmia, mydriasis, hypertonia, respiratory disturbances and vomiting [5].

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## Case report

**Patient:** An 18-year-old male, high school student with positive social mobility and social adaptation. No prior mental disorders could be found in his or in his family's history. The patient was delivered to the Psychiatric University Hospital of Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg from the urological department. Two days prior to admission to the psychiatric clinic, he drank (at approximately 12 o'clock) a cup of tea made by boiling two flowers of Angel's Trumpet. Soon after consuming the tea, he was invited by his mother and grandmother to enjoy the afternoon in his grandmother's garden. In the following two or three hours, the patient was accompanied by both women who did not recognize any abnormality in behaviour, expression or bodily activities of the young man. Two or three hours after having consumed Angel's Trumpet, he went to bed in the small garden house because he felt tired. He remained in the garden house unobserved for approximately 2 h. After two hours, both women saw him entering a small WC in the same garden. Approximately 20 min later, he came out with blood streaming down his whole body. They recognized that, while he was in the WC, he had amputated his penis very deeply at the root, and had also amputated his tongue, but fortunately not very deeply. The amputation was carried out by using a pair of pruning shears. Immediately after the amputations he was very anxious, but at the same time tried to calm down his mother and grandmother by saying "don't worry, don't worry, it will be alright, it will be alright." He was immediately transported to the University Surgery Hospital, but a re-implantation of the amputated parts was impossible.

Approximately 24 h after the self-amputation, the young man was examined by a psychiatrist from our team. The patient reported a complete amnesia for the time between going to bed and waking up from the surgical operation in the hospital. No other psychopathological symptoms were registered during the psychiatric investigation 24 h after the event.

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## Discussion

Perhaps this case is the most dramatic reported in the literature after consuming Angel's Trumpet.

Delirium, hallucinations (especially visual), agitation, incoherence, aggressive behaviour and memory disturbances have been reported so far, as well as cardiac symptoms, mydriasis and other vegetative symptoms [4–6]. Although, due to the amnesia and the unobserved behaviour of the patient, it is impossible to diagnose a delirium or other acute psychoses due to intoxication, it can be assumed that an acute psychotic condition was probably the reason for the self-amputation. The consequences of this case should be to educate young people, their parents and teachers, but also the authorities on the dangers resulting from consuming Angel's Trumpet or other "natural drugs". Such an education is absolutely necessary considering the fact that Angel's Trumpet has become very popular as an ornament in private and non-private gardens because of its beauty and attractive name.

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