

TITLE 1: "Ask the Doctor"

TITLE 2:

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KEYWORDS:

- Medical news/updates

ABSTRACT OVERVIEW: A question is raised by a reader as to whether drug use (amphetamines) causes/exacerbates the symptoms of RLS.

COPY OF ARTICLE:

Ask the Doctor

Q. *My girlfriend has all the classic symptoms of RLS, and is just recovering from a 10-year history of drug abuse (amphetamines). Has secondary RLS has been linked in any way to drug abuse and dependence?*



A. Withdrawal from the drugs is probably the best explanation for your girlfriend's symptoms. We know that one of the greatest biochemical effects of amphetamines is the stimulation of dopaminergic activity. Amphetamine use may have suppressed RLS during the period of drug addiction, and when amphetamines were discontinued, dopamine stimulation was no longer present and the symptoms came out. However, if your girlfriend never had RLS prior to the use of the amphetamines, this case raises the interesting possibility that the drug may change the receptor sensitivity setpoint of the dopaminergic receptors, thus making an individual more susceptible to RLS.

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