



## My Contacts Got Me High

### Description

### ‘My Contacts Got Me High’

45-year-old Eleanor (not her real name) came in for a general review of visual function and health and wanted to be fit with contact lenses. She preferred contacts over glasses given her deep myopic astigmatism – in the range of  $-8.00-2.50 \times 180$  for both eyes. Glasses are expensive and heavy and they tend to produce more pronounced optical aberrations and magnification differentials for higher prescriptions, while contacts are of negligible mass, they produce a more balanced optic, and are relatively inexpensive. In Eleanor’s case, the contacts were especially inexpensive given she would typically overextend wear by months over the recommended wear time.

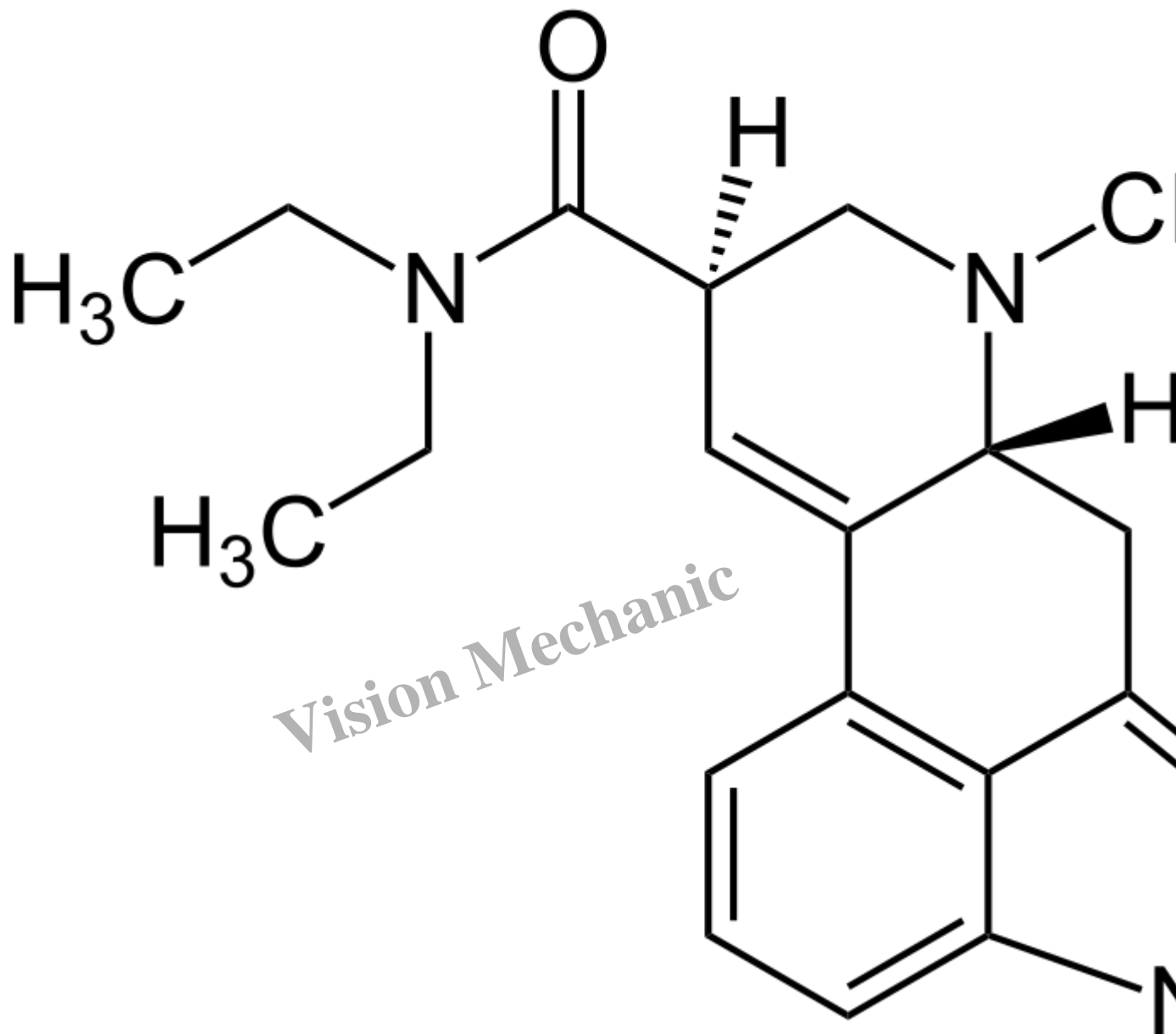
In 2012, Eleanor was at a party where, by her own report, she inadvertently ‘used a contact lens solution that was loaded with LSD’. In 2018, the film ‘[Climax](#)’ by Director Gaspar Noé explores this nightmare in some detail. While I question how someone would inadvertently use an LSD-tainted ‘contact lens’ solution, the story goes that, apparently, the contact lenses Eleanor was wearing soaked up the LSD and kept getting her high for a month after the incident.



A character using LSD-infused eye drops in Gaspar Noé's 2018 film 'Climax'.

Soft contact lenses (made of hydrogel or silicone hydrogel) **can** absorb LSD if it's in a liquid solution. Soft lenses are designed to absorb and retain moisture, which can include dissolved substances like LSD. This could lead to a slow release of the drug over time as the lens gradually releases the absorbed liquid onto the eye. However, the exact extent of absorption and release would depend on factors like the lens material, the concentration of LSD, and the duration of exposure. I could not find any studies that looked at this as either a complication/hazard, or as a means of delivery therapy.

Eleanor was seriously impacted by her experience, emotionally, psychologically. If you've never experienced the LSD 'high', it's not something you want to fall into unwittingly. In this case, even if Eleanor did know about the LSD in the solution she put in her eyes, the protracted impact could and would be more surprising, or even disturbing. That said, LSD has a 1/2-life of 3-5 hours, with all metabolites excreted within 48hours. The effects of LSD wane with each repeated dose, despite the 1/2 life duration. So, even if Eleanor was wearing LSD-soaked contacts, the effect would have been much more pronounced in the first 24 hours, then waning fairly quickly thereafter. I would suspect that the impact would attenuate more quickly if she was wearing her contacts 24/7, rather than removing them overnight. I have no data to indicated how long the LSD dose would remain at significant levels following application and daily wear of the lenses, but clearly if the solution Eleanor was using was in her contact case, she would have been re-dosing at full strength every time she removed the lenses and reapplied them to her eyes, she would have been hit with another full dose – attenuated or not, the effect would still persist for hours.



The molecular structure of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD).

In the end, Eleanor's ocular health was fine and her sight was well compensated with both contacts and glasses, which I insisted she have in addition to contacts. She requested daily contacts which I could not provide since her prescription required 'extended range' or 'XR' lenses which are only available as monthlies. She was concerned that monthlies would get her high again, and so I reassured her that there was no way this could happen unless she chose to do so.

As a rule, the ocular route of drug administration is effective, so long as the solution applied is safe. Obviously, there is no way of determining safety of an LSD solution off the street, just like so many other things that are not certified by appropriate governing bodies – think cosmetic contacts for Halloween. My rule is simple: When there is doubt, there is NO doubt – don't do it. If you feel your eyes or vision are troubled, again, there is no doubt – go see your optometrist, and don't be afraid to speak

the whole truth with your doctor. The details always matter, and your time spent is in confidence.

Hallucinogenics are seeing a resurgence in use for a variety of psychological and psychiatric conditions, and I applaud this. As with everything, don't be your own doctor – you'll have a fool for a client.

Enjoy the ride!

Dr. B

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### Author

charles

*Vision Mechanic*