

“After ingesting Betamethasone: Stuttering off.”

Report in the online forum of the German stuttering self-help organization BVSS. Translation by Torsten Hesse.

The forum is currently closed because of difficulties with the new German General Data Protection Regulation. See here for the complete original text: <http://www.stuttering-theory.eu/betamethason-d.pdf>

On April 12, 2012, the user “Jens23” wrote:

Hello all,

Some months ago, I experienced something unique and wonderful. After a petty nose surgery, I was released from hospital, and the doctor had prescribed me a drug named Celestamine 0,5. Its agent is Betamethasone; one tablet contains 0.5mg. [...]

Over four days, I first ingested 4 tablets, then 3, then 2, and then 1 tablet a day. On the first day (after ingesting 4 tablets, i.e., 2mg Betamethasone), the following happened: I thought my head was bursting. I assume I had an extremely high blood- or brain pressure (I did not measure). I laid down, slept a bit and had terribly bad dreams.

After that, I sat down at the piano. During play, something suddenly tensed in both ears. My hearing changed completely. I no longer perceived tones as 'boomy' but as 'crystal clear' and pleasant, just as if unpleasant frequencies were filtered out by the ears.

Further, I suddenly could play as rapidly as never before. I felt muscle activity (pushing down piano keys) and the tones heard as running completely in sync. At the same time, the muscles involved in playing relaxed automatically.

After I stopped playing good-humoredly, I for fun decided to recite some rap songs, which had been part of my fluent speech training before then. The following happened: Again, something tensed in my ears during speech, without me consciously doing anything. I had indeed not the feeling that unpleasant frequencies were filtered out of my voice by ears, but the same effects as during piano playing appeared:

1. I experienced muscle activity during speech and what I heard as synchronous. It simply matched.
2. I was able to speak the rap lyrics in a crazy speed.
3. I felt that I spoke with much less effort and that I had COMPLETE control over my speaking. I thought it would not matter at all if I made a slip because, with that degree of control, slips would (a) hardly occur [...], and (b) I could them correct immediately.

After the rap lyrics, I took a newspaper for reading. Again, I could read in an extremely rapid and controlled manner. The same was with spontaneously self-formulated speech [...].

I came to the following conclusion: I had just experienced how a normally speaking person feels: Speech comes automatically without effort, neither mental nor physical one. I was able to speak true to my thoughts. It was the most beautiful moment in my life. I felt myself as if all my dreams came true at a blow. And they did, even if only temporarily.

Unfortunately, I became aware of my speech ability only late at night, thus I could not yet talk with someone else. The effect was no longer present the next day. I ingested three tablets, but I seemingly need four tablets for generating fluent speech.

My thoughts/questions on this incident:

What an experience. Now I know a normal speaker feels. An experience that probably only few stutterers share with me and that very increases my longing for that state. [...]

During stuttered speech, I hear my voice apparently later than I feel my muscle activity. By the medication, I hear my voice immediately together with the muscle movements, hence the feeling that it fits together, that the two control systems run synchronously. [...]

P. S. I vow I did not invent that. It was not a beautiful dream, it was definitely real. And of course, I do not want to appeal anyone to misuse drugs.