

## 'Upgrading ketamine will harm animals'

ANIMALS will suffer if the Government upgrades ketamine to a Class B drug, because vets will be unable to sedate distressed or injured animals in the field, experts have warned.

The drug is rated Class C, but the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) has recommended that it be reclassified because of the physical and psychological harm it causes.

However, Prof David Nutt, the ACMD's former chairman, said there was no need for the change, which would stop vets from doing their jobs effectively.

"Ketamine is currently a schedule four drug, meaning that it can be easily used in daily work by vets and medics," said Prof Nutt.

"If it is upgraded to schedule two, it will have to be kept under lock and key. This will impede necessary clinical use as an anaesthetic as vets will not be able to use it in the field, for example, so animals will suffer.

"Changing the schedule is due to fears that the drug is being taken from clinical stores, but there is no evidence that is happening, so there is absolutely no need for this change."

Prof Nutt resigned from the ACMD in 2009 over the decision to reclassify cannabis from a Class C to a Class B drug.

Earlier this year, Prof Les Iversen, the chairman of the ACMD, warned that ketamine users as young as 20 were having to have their bladders removed due to heavy consumption of the party drug.

Originally designed as an anaesthetic and tranquilliser, often used on horses during veterinary surgery, ketamine was banned as a recreational drug in 2006.

An estimated 120,000 people misused the drug in England and Wales during 2012-13, figures suggest.

In March last year, Theresa May, the Home Secretary, asked the ACMD to refresh its advice on ketamine, which was last reviewed in 2004.

"We are recommending increasing the classification from Class C to Class B," said Dr Paul Dargan, chairman of the ACMD's ketamine working group. "That's largely based on the medical harms associated with it, particularly the bladder-related harms, and more anecdotal evidence of social harms."



**1,000 Christmas kisses** | Mirabel and Cosmo Summerfield carry mistletoe bought by their parents at the last mistletoe and holly auction before Christmas, yesterday at Tenbury Wells, Worcs. Markets selling the parasitic plant, which is common in local orchards, have been held at the town for at least 100 years

## In Brief

### Prisoner went on run after jumping out of wheelchair

A prisoner who told police he could barely walk staged an escape by springing from his wheelchair as he arrived at a hospital.

Owess Khan, 25, claimed he fell off a bench and suffered a knee injury after he was arrested in June for drug dealing. As he was accompanied by police in handcuffs at Burnley General Hospital, Lancs, Khan leapt to his feet, knocked over his guards and ran off. He was later traced to his girlfriend's home after using a hacksaw to cut off his handcuffs.

At Burnley Crown Court, Khan admitted conspiracy to supply cocaine and escape and was jailed for three years. He had been detained for 33 weeks in July for an unrelated assault on an ex-youth worker.

### Boy, three, drowned while family was moving house

A three-year-old boy drowned in a pond while his family were moving house.

The child was named by neighbours in Frongcysyllte, near Wrexham, North Wales, as Harvey-Lee Williams.

Geoff Jones, 65, said: "I saw him just an hour or two before he was reported missing and he was as playful as ever with the family dog in the garden. They must have only taken their eyes off him for a few seconds, and he's wandered off."

It is believed that Amy Dipper, the boy's mother, was moving house with her partner when Harvey-Lee wandered off.

### 'Scrooge' warden hands out fines at charity race

Father Christmases who took part in a charity run returned to their cars to find a traffic warden had given them £50 parking fines.

More than 400 runners taking part in the Jingle Jog in Derby on Sunday were raising money for the Derby Hospitals Charity. Gloria Booker, 67, a spectator, said the run had started late, which meant some tickets had expired. She added: "He was a Scrooge. He could have shown a bit of Christmas spirit." A council spokesman said motorists could challenge the fines.

# Behaving badly? It was written in the stars

By Amy Willis

ASTROLOGY may seem like harmless fun, but a study suggests that following your star sign could be bad for you.

People who read their horoscope daily were found to be more likely to exhibit impulsive or indulgent behaviour when their zodiac was negative, the research suggested.

This is because reading a poor outcome in your star sign makes you more susceptible to temptation, it is believed.

The study, published in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, showed that those

who believed their fate could change were more prone to erratic decision-making following bad news in their zodiac. It seemed to contradict the thinking that reading star signs could improve mood and encourage people to undertake selfless activities.

Scientists at the University of South Carolina and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, presented a number of participants with unfavourable star-sign readings and asked them to choose between either going to a party or cleaning their home. Participants who selected going to a party were seen as

having made an indulgent decision and those who chose to clean their home were categorised as having made a virtuous one.

The study found that those who had read a negative horoscope before the choice had an increased likelihood of deciding to go to the party rather than the more virtuous activity. Researchers had expected participants to choose a more virtuous action to prevent the unfavourable outcome presented in their horoscope.

"Conventional wisdom might suggest that for people who believe they can

*'Wisdom might suggest a bad horoscope should result in an attempt to improve their fate, results showed the opposite'*

change their fate, an unfavourable horoscope should result in an attempt to improve their fate," said the authors of the study, Hyeonmin Kim of Johns Hopkins University, and Katina Kulow and Thomas Kramer of the University of

South Carolina. "Our results showed that reading an unfavourable horoscope actually has the opposite effect on a person."

The researchers found that those who believed they had a fixed fate showed little change in their decision-making and instead remained focused on their day ahead.

This month, Arch Crawford, a former stock trader who earned the nickname "Crash Crawford" after predicting the "flash crash" of 1962, revealed that he had used astrology to guide his trades.

A study released last month suggested 37 per cent of the public read their horo-

scopes before making big decisions. Women were also found to be twice as likely to visit a psychic than men. The psychic industry in the United Kingdom is worth an estimated £100 million.

Madonna is said to be a keen advocate of horoscopes and psychics, having been said to have consulted a psychic before adopting her daughter Mercy.

Naomi Watts, who played Diana, Princess of Wales, in the recent film adaptation of her life, has also spoken about using psychics and claimed she had received permission from the late princess to play the part.

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