

This is an exciting time for the music sector – people continue to produce great music, with a huge home fan base and internationally renowned artists. But all this is put in jeopardy by rampant illegal downloading, as are careers for young people who would like to work in the area of music in the future. If music industry could crack this nut, then the future for the world music would be very exciting.

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### NOOTROPICS – EFFECTIVE DRUGS OR BRAIN DOPING?

Nootropics, also referred to as smart drugs, cognitive enhancers, memory enhancers, neuro enhancers and intelligence enhancers are pharmaceuticals, supplements, nutraceuticals, and functional foods which are invented to improve mental capacities such as concentration, memory, intelligence, motivation, attention, cognition.

The phrase nootropic was coined in 1964 by the Dr. Corneliu E. Giurgea, taken from the Greek words *nous*, or "mind," and *trepein* meaning "to bend/turn".

Nootropics are thought to work by altering the availability of the brain's supply of neurochemicals (neurotransmitters, enzymes, and hormones), by improving the brain's oxygen supply, or by stimulating nerve growth.

When one first hears about nootropics a lot of questions occur. Are nootropics safe? Do they really work? Where are the studies?

Today's science is yesterday's myth. But don't expect instant super intelligence when taking nootropics; expect a slow curve of progression and improvement. Some individuals never observe a change at all. For others it makes a considerable effect. There are even individuals who say nootropics changed their lives.

The mind is said to be the most complex machine known to human beings. So we have to be extremely careful with it. It is disturbing to consider that if you endure to become Eighty-five decades of age, you have over a 50 percent possibility of suffering Alzheimer's. If this happens, you will spend your very last days in a state of anxiety, misunderstandings, and pain. Most of nootropics were invented to lower the

possibility of such diseases to develop, to prolong capable and healthy living. And they are doing this well so far. For example, pramiracetam, which is the newer form of well-known piracetam is very effective. Pramiracetam advances concentration, learning capability, memory, orientation and cognition on the whole significantly. It also has antidepressive action. Nowadays there are over 10 nootropic medicines, referred to the family of Racetams, being synthesized and on the 3rd stage of clinical trials or even registered; among them are oxiracetam, aniracetam, etiracetam, pramiracetam and so on.

The effect of nootropics treatment appears not after the first intake, as with psychostimulants, but during the treatment course, which may take a long period.

Besides, there are other families of nootropics drugs synthesized. Nootropic effect can be found among other types of drugs with different chemical origin.

At present, there are several drugs on the market that improve memory, concentration, and planning, and reduce impulsive behavior. Many more are in different stages of development. The most commonly used class of drug is stimulants.

These drugs are used primarily to treat people with cognitive difficulties such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and ADHD. However, more widespread use is being recommended by some researchers. These drugs have a variety of human enhancement applications as well, and are marketed heavily in the Internet. Nevertheless, intense marketing may not correlate with efficacy; while scientific studies support some of the claimed benefits, it is worth noting that many of the claims attributed to most nootropics have not been formally tested. There are plenty of people, who use nootropics without medical indications nowadays, describing their experience on the I-net. Reading it one can find out all pros and cons of using such drugs, which cannot be treated light-mindedly, because of side effects or personal intolerance.

The non-medical use of such psychostimulant as methylphenidate and amphetamine as nootropic agents is as high as 25% on some US higher education grounds, particularly in institutions with more aggressive entrance requirements. And

the use of sensible medication – "nootropics" – to enhance educational efficiency is increasing.

To nootropic or not to nootropic – that is the question...

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### IS INTERNET IN BELARUS A LUXURY?

Every day the so-called World Wide Web catches more and more people in its cyber world. Throughout world history, technology has fostered change in human society but never at such a rapid pace as the changes today.

Internet has become an important political, social, cultural and economic factor in our today's globalized world. Together with new communication technologies it is able to accelerate cultural and socio-political changes in societies. Internet access is also a condition for attracting investments, hi-tech development and services market growth in such transforming countries as Belarus.

In Belarus Internet was considered to be a luxury 10 years ago. Mainly students and IT-workers used it at that time. It started to be more accessible but remained yet expensive 5 years ago. The rates on Internet in Belarus significantly exceeded (in 2-3 times) the prices in the neighboring countries (Russia, Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania). Furthermore Internet providing services were paid according to traffic (depending on how many Megabytes were transmitted by a client). High price and by-traffic-rating hindered the popularity of web-services in Belarus. Only a small percentage of state-owned and private businesses could afford a permanent Internet access. Office workers in the private sector joined the students and IT-men as Internet users but people's main source of information was still state TV at that time.

Radical changes took place a couple of years ago when the Belarusian government liberalized the Internet market and the state Internet-provider Beltelecom set damping prices for Internet services, cheap and unlimited tariffs were introduced. As a result, the number of Internet users in Belarus currently exceeds 3.5 million people (in the country with 9.5 million of population). Belarusians started to check