Letter to the Editors

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Ephedrine and Obesity

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A recent paper in this journal demonstrates the thermogenic effect of ephedrine in obese mice and rats [1]. In consequence, the authors call for clinical trials of ephedrine in the treatment of human obesity. They state that there are no reports on the use of ephedrine for this purpose. In fact, ephedrine has been used in Denmark (and neighboring parts of Sweden) as one of the ingredients, and probably the effective substance in a composite slimming pill, known popularly as the 'Elsinore pill'. A few years ago, the prescription of these pills reached almost epidemic proportions. Controlled clinical studies of the pill and of ephedrine alone in out-patient treatment of obesity have been published [2–5], together with a report on chronic ephedrine intoxication [6]. In Sweden, an official warning against the prescription of ephedrine as a slimming agent has been issued [7].

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