

LGC Classification: RESTRICTED

Statement of Denise Stanworth

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Lab. Ref. LGC-14226217

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Alcohol

The concentration of alcohol detected in the blood and urine is very low and for the purposes of comparison is well below the statutory limit for driving of 80 milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood and 107 milligrams per 100 millilitres of urine.

The alcohol detected could be the residue of alcohol consumed at a much earlier time. However, I cannot exclude the possibility that all the alcohol detected could have been generated after death by microbiological activity.

Alcohol is a depressant of the central nervous system slowing down many of the processes of the brain. At low concentrations alcohol produces euphoria and reduces social inhibition leading to increased sociability, talkativeness and some impairment of co-ordination usually seen as clumsiness. At moderate levels, mood, co-ordination and movement is increasingly affected with development of a staggering gait and slurred speech, slowed reaction time, nausea and drowsiness. At a high degree of intoxication previous symptoms are exaggerated with falling over, confusion progressing to stupor, drowsiness progressing to sleep and unconsciousness.

Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB)

GHB is an anaesthetic drug with primarily sedative properties originally developed as a premedication prior to surgery. It gained popularity in the 1980's among body builders for its ability to stimulate muscle development. More recently it gained popularity as a recreational drug particularly on the dance and club scene and has also been implicated in 'date-rape' incidents. Gamma-butyrolactone (GBL) is a related substance that is rapidly converted to GHB in the body. I am therefore unable to say whether GHB or GBL was the substance originally taken by Mr Walgate.

GHB is usually found in a liquid form popularly known as 'liquid ecstasy' but is also sold as a powder or in the form of capsules. GBL is found in liquid form.

At low doses GHB is reported to produce euphoria, to lower social inhibitions and to increase libido. At higher doses euphoria gives way to sedation which may lead to unrousable sleep. Dizziness, nausea and vomiting, amnesia and visual disturbances have also been reported. These effects, which are similar to those of alcohol, start about 15 minutes after administration and may last for several hours. Larger doses produce anaesthesia and may lead to coma and respiratory depression.

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