

The mystery of people using poison as a tonic in 19th century Europe

Arsenic is known today as a health hazard, but in the past it has been considered a tonic.

Regardless of the era, there are people who do stupid things. And in an era when science is more vague and outdated, people are more likely to do stupid things.

As we all know, arsenic trioxide, also known as arsenic, is an ancient poison. The most common poison in China's archery film is Arsenic, a type of arsenic trioxide that contains many impurities.



However, when used in small amounts, it will not cause immediate death, so there are some people who believe that amethyst also functions as a tonic and they named " Arsenic Eaters (Arsenic Eaters). And this strange behavior even created a wave of self-poisoning in the 19th century.

In 19th-century Europe, there was an area called Styria (now Austria). In addition to the beauty of nature and wine, the locals here are also famous for their love of eating arsenic and treating them as a tonic.

Sometimes they will swallow arsenic, but often they will crush them into flour and sprinkle on bread, bacon, some of them are so addicted to them that if they do not eat, they will feel tired. and did not earnestly do anything.



Fig. 231. Arsenic-eaters of Styria.

It is estimated that this strange habit began to spread gradually in the 17th century. At that time, the mining industry in Styria was thriving.

Underground ore is often affected by arsenic, so it needs to be fused to obtain more pure metal. In the process, arsenic contained in ores undergoes oxidation with air, and a white solid forms on the wall of the chimney, now known as white arsenic. But at that time, the locals called these arsenic blocks "hittrichfeitl", meaning "white smoke".

In order to prevent clogged tubes from the kilns, local people regularly remove these arsenic blocks and use them and of course they will go into the stomachs of the locals.

In 1851, a doctor named Von Tschudi introduced the arsenic eaters in a medical journal for the first time.

People there have consumed arsenic in small doses for many years. Just like taking vitamins, they took this poison as a health supplement.

They believe that men who use arsenic for a long time can reinforce body strength and increase resistance. For women, arsenic can make the skin look rosy as well as make the body fuller. Locals also believe that this poison can make it easier to breathe when walking or working on mountains with thin air.



According to the original description of Von Tschudi, Styrian people who started eating the toxin also needed a process and they would become more and more addicted. At first, they only eat a very small amount and will increase over time as well as depending on emotions.

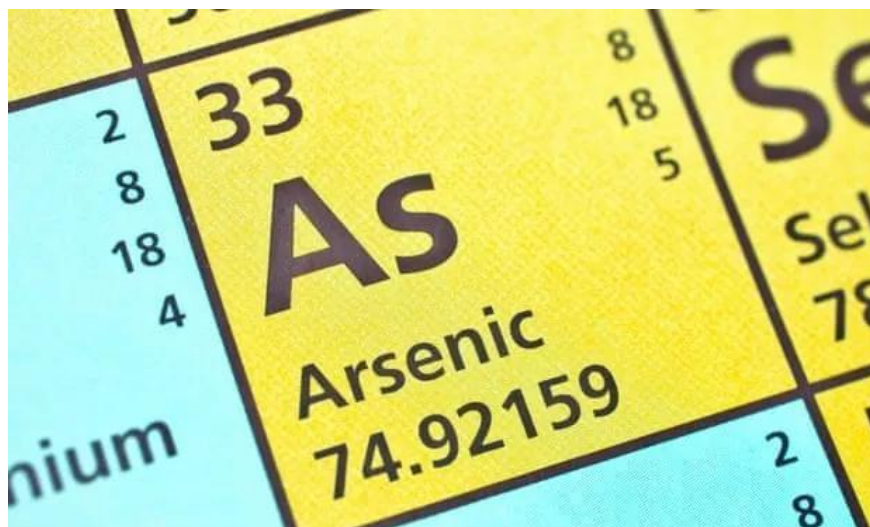
But it seems that the indigenous people after using them for a long time can develop resistance to arsenic and their health is not seriously damaged. Among them, there have been people who have used arsenic for decades but the body is still healthy and has no adverse reactions.

There are even people who are addicted to them, if they suddenly miss an arsenic-containing meal or reduce their dose, they will feel uncomfortable, with symptoms like insomnia, loss of appetite, vomiting and constipation, or pain. due to spasms.



In the past, people also added various deadly toxins like lead and radium to cosmetics and daily necessities on a large scale. But this group of arsenic eaters has aroused people's curiosity to a great extent because arsenic is deadly poison, but these people do not seem to be okay when consuming them.

When arsenic appears as arsenic trioxide, their lethal dose is only 14.6 mg / kg. For an adult weighing 50 kg, 0.1 gram will be fatal. If the purity is high enough, a white arsenic seed the size of a soybean seed is enough to kill a person multiple times. Therefore, this issue is really strange.



As soon as Von Tschudi's reports and observations were reported, it immediately made the scientific community curious to other scholars starting field trips to find the answers. They visited more than a dozen local doctors and confirmed the authenticity of the arsenic tradition of locals and more and more details were revealed.

In 1875, a doctor named Knapp specially invited two people to eat arsenic for testing. They swallowed 400 mg of arsenic trioxide and 300 mg of arsenic sulfide in public. The two remained healthy in front of the crowd the next day, and a urine test showed that they contained large amounts of arsenic in their bodies.



So far this mystery has yet to be determined, but arsenic use in the long run will make people look more rosy. But of course this has nothing to do with health. And the fact is that arsenic can stay in muscle tissue and cause edema, which can cause capillary dilatation and make the skin pinker. This also explains the red face and weight gain of Styrian women.

But if normal people use arsenic for a long time, they will soon show different symptoms of chronic arsenic poisoning, such as the skin turns yellow and gradually develops into yellow-brown calluses. scales - also known as keratosis. In addition, people with chronic arsenic poisoning will also suffer a lot of hair loss and white lines

on the nails.



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