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The drug that kills nice girls like Paula

By TANYA REED

THE fateful telephone call came at 9.15 last Sunday morning to the neat, five-bedroomed house in the quiet suburbs of Cheshire.

The doctors said Paula Carrier, 20, happy and with everything to live for, was seriously ill. She was on a life support machine in the intensive care ward at Manchester Royal Infirmary and had already suffered two heart attacks.

For Tony and Dorothy Carrier the news was devastating. They couldn't understand it. They couldn't comprehend how their beloved daughter, who occasionally sipped a diet Coke or orange, could now be dying in a hospital bed.

Only the day before she had kissed them goodbye. She had gone to stay with a friend and together they were planning an innocent enough night — of dancing, of fun, in the Manchester clubs. It was the sort of night that home-loving Paula had enjoyed from time to time on special occasions like her birthday.

BUT always before, the trainee hairdresser from middle-class Marple had safely come home.

Now something terrible had happened.

Somehow during that Saturday evening Paula had done the unthinkable. She had taken what the hospital said was 'a substance'. It turned out to be the drug Ecstasy.

Today nobody knows how she came to swallow that one pill; whether Paula took it intentionally, perhaps as a silly experiment with her friends. Or was this carefree girl cruelly duped in the clubs by someone who slipped the drug into her Coke or orange?

'None of her close friends had anything to do with drugs. Drugs were something that other people's children take, the kids that are out of control,' her distraught father said last night.

'Drugs were something we had seen on the television or read



CAREFREE: Happy Paula at a family wedding had everything to live for

It started as a night of innocent fun. It ended in a death by Ecstasy

about in the newspapers. It had nothing to do with Paula. When the hospital told us Paula had taken Ecstasy we didn't even know what it was. We just assumed it was not dangerous — we just didn't know about it.'

This morning Tony and Dorothy Carrier know Ecstasy is very dangerous indeed. A killer. They know that in Britain recently 15 young people between 16 and 21 have died after taking

the drug, chemically known as MDMA and banned since 1977. Only on Friday doctors warned that the pills, costing £10 to £15 each in Manchester, can harm the heart, the liver, cause serious depression and even brain damage.

At the hospital 47-year-old Tony and Dorothy sat, hugging each other in their grief, beside Paula's bedside for two days. The hospital cubicle, shrouded by



Picture research by JOHN CARTER

FAMILY ALBUM: Paula aged nine, top, on holiday in Jersey, centre, and in the Canary Islands, below

chance of surviving when she was taken into intensive care,' said Tony Carrier. 'Gallons of tears were shed, everybody I know was praying. At our church they were saying prayers for Paula too.'

Today those cards of condolence cover the Carrier family's sitting room. In the tree-lined street, where everyone knows everyone else, neighbours have even cancelled their holidays because of their grief.

They had watched Paula grow up. It was from the same suburban street that she had set off for the Marple Methodist Sunday school as a little girl. It was from there that she went first to Rose Hill primary, and then later to the big secondary school nearby.

THEY had seen her proudly get her first job, at the Pampers hairdressing salon in nearby Offerton. In the last few months they had heard about her learning to drive, borrowing the Astra car belonging to her 22-year-old sister. Tony Carrier, a builder said: 'Paula was doing well. Last weekend she really wanted to go out with Greg, Annette and her boyfriend.'

'But she was a loyal sort of girl. Because she had promised to go to the clubs with a girlfriend she didn't want to let her down.'

'My wife and I went to a wedding in Blackpool in the afternoon and then on to a 25th anniversary in the evening. We knew she was staying with this friend, so we didn't worry about her on Saturday night.'

'We have now discovered that she went to Henry's cafe-bar in central Manchester and then on to a discotheque called Royale. We don't know exactly when she took Ecstasy that night.'

He keeps breaking down. At his side his 45-year-old wife wept as she said: 'I expect Paula to walk through the door. I expect her to be here with us again. This is so unreal. We just never knew about this drug called Ecstasy.'

Sister Annette added: 'As well as being sisters we were the very best of friends. She would do my hair for me. Her bedroom is next to mine and now I keep looking

curtains was full of flowers and cards. The rest of Paula's family visited at all hours.

Tony and Dorothy's hopes were raised when their pretty daughter moved just slightly — but by Tuesday evening she was dead. Ecstasy had taken Paula from her parents, her older sister Annette and brother David, and the boyfriend who adored her, Greg Rushton.

'The doctors gave her very little

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