

SPECIAL REPORT

Drug Use Not Limited to Any Segment of Society

(Editor's note: This is the first of a two-part series on drug abuse, based on a recent study by the District Attorney's Office.)
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Let's clear the air about drugs.

Life with drugs is neither exciting or interesting and anyone who has lived this life relates that it's dull and degrading. And drug abuse is not limited to one ethnic or economic group; drug abuse occurs in all walks of life.

Our office recently completed an extensive study of drug abuse and what we discovered about the symptoms and the effects of marijuana, narcotics, and dangerous drugs on the individual and society merits the widest possible audience.

Most narcotics and drugs when properly administered

have a beneficial use. However, heroin and marijuana have no beneficial use, while LSD is still in the experimental stage and its properties are really unknown. This makes it dangerous.

YOUNG PEOPLE and adults who advocate the legalization of marijuana and claim falsely that it is no more harmful than alcohol should realize that even if marijuana were to be like alcohol it would still be against the law for minors to use it, just as minors cannot now legally use alcohol.

Furthermore, the fact that marijuana and other narcotics and dangerous drugs can be harmful is a valid enough reason to prohibit use.

Getting down to specifics about marijuana, it is narcotic even though penalties for its

production, sale and possession vary when compared with other narcotics. Marijuana is smoked most often in the form of cigarettes, but is sometimes smoked in pipes.

TO AN on-looker, it seems to have much the same effect as alcohol—the user acts silly, giggles, and seems proud of himself while behaving ridiculously.

Use of marijuana can prove to be harmful because it creates a faulty sense of time and loss of judgment that may be fatal in such activities as driving a car.

Also to be remembered is that in many cases the kind of person who experiments with marijuana will later turn to heroin for a bigger "kick."

THAT MARIJUANA is dangerous has been related by

Dr. Victor H. Vogel, Chairman, Narcotics Addiction Evaluations Authority, who interviewed 100 consecutive heroin addicts at the California Rehabilitation Center, Corona.

"In each case," he has related, "marijuana use had preceded the heroin use."

These are some of the statements obtained by Dr. Vogel:

"Marijuana makes me unable to operate normally—for instance, drive a car or operate a machine."

"You smoke a stick of marijuana in the morning, get lazy on the job and get fired. In my case, it led to fixing with heroin."

"I have gotten into plenty of trouble while high on marijuana—gang fights and beat up my wife."

"What used to bother me

was it numbed my brain and I could not think right. I could not drive very well."

HERE'S WHAT competent medical men and other authorities have told us.

Dr. James L. Goddard, commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, noted in testimony before a Senate sub-committee that "physical and mental effects will vary in the individual marijuana smoker, depending on four factors:

"1. The circumstances in which the drug is used; 2. The amount consumed (usually by smoking); 3. The personality of the user; and 4. The user's previous experience with marijuana."

He cautioned that "the most common reaction" from the use of marijuana is the development of a state of

mind in which ideas seem disconnected, uncontrolled and freely flowing.

"Perception is disturbed, minutes seem to be hours and seconds seem to be minutes."

"Space may be broadened and near objects may appear far away. When large doses are used—doses generally heavier than normally used in this country—extremely vivid hallucinations may occur."

"With such large doses, panic and a fear of death may make the experience highly unpleasant."

DR. VOGEL, who interviewed the addicts at Corona, notes that "people who are high on marijuana are more likely to uncritically accept suggestions from persons around them."

"Increased suggestibility is

especially dangerous in the gang situation where one person will suggest a drag race, rape or other gang action which the group will be inclined to go along with."

Meanwhile, Dr. Edward Bloomquist, M.D., associate clinical professor of surgery and anesthesiology at USC, says that "complex intellectual capacities are impaired (by the use of marijuana) particularly those which govern speed and accuracy."

A still stronger warning has been issued by the California Medical Association, which adopted as its position the following statement by Drs. Dana L. Farnsworth, M.D., director, and Curtis Proud, M.D., chief of medicine, Harvard University Health Services:

"Marijuana does not produce physical addiction, but

it does produce significant dependence, to a serious degree. This is a fact well known to doctors working with college students."

"The social influences surrounding the use of marijuana also encourage experimentation with other drugs, notably LSD and, of course, may lead to addiction to narcotics."

"WE KNOW that long-term subtle psychological damage may result from LSD. Such damage may be glossed over by the pleasure and enthusiasm engendered by the substance, but we have seen too many cases of psychic breakdown to doubt the serious dangers of the drug."

"It is even possible that the brain is structurally damaged. There is recent evidence that

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