l!S. to **the NEWS**

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IS MARIJUANA SAFE?

The human body has been called "the incredible machine" and the brain is its master control. It governs sensations, moods, thoughts, and actions by a complex series of chemically-related controls. Would you willingly upset this delicate balance by throwing a monkey-wrench in it? Many people do by smoking marijuana.

In a recent book called Sensual Drugs, Dr. Hardin B. Jones, Professor of Medical Physics at the University of California, describes how marijuana impacts on the synapses.of the brain, throwing mental function and bodily responses out of kilter. He has collected and added to the mounting evidence that marijuana is one of our country's most serious public health problems.

Dr. Jones says that many marijuana users in executive offices and factories suffer chronically from an altered judgment that may affect the quality of their work. We would all be endangered if airline pilots, air traffic controllers, train motormen, firemen, policemen, surgeons, or automobile drivers use the drug.·

Marijuana is an unusual drug in that its active ingredient, tetra hydrocannabinol (THC), is retained in the body for long periods of time. A study conducted by Louis Lemberger of the Indiana University School of Medicine indicates that 30 percent of the THC is retained in the body at the end of a week, and this 30 percent is then eliminated more slowly than the first 70 percent.

This study was confirmed by Gabriel G. Nahas, a Columbia University anesthesiologist, who concluded that THC accumulates in the fatty tissues such as the liver, brain, bone marrow, and adrenal glands, and is not eliminated rapidly. MI: **1epea1!ed** H, Il'S. **Nnt.mhtca I:: ti:& bod:,.** Marijuana is not water-soluable like alcohol.

W. D. M. Paton, Professor of Pharmacology at Oxford, and Robert Heath, Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry and Neurology at Tulane University, have reported the profound changes that occur in the membranes of brain cells, red and white blood cells,

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liver and lung cells, and sperm. Marijuana appears to injure the fine, hairlike extensions of the brain cell membranes that communicate with other brain cells.

Ors. Harold Kolansky and William T. Moore,psychiatrists associated with the University of Pennsylvania, concluded from their study that mariJuana has "a corroding effect on the will power of the individual, as well as on his emotions and on his ability to think. Of particular concern was the pronounced impairment of the intellectual and emotional maturation in many of the younger patients. Mental confusion, poor concentration, and a difficulty with concept formation and recent memory were also common symptoms."

Robert J. Staab and Vincent de P. Lynch of St. John's University College of Pharmacy warn pregnant women against smoking marijuana in the light of the "high incidence" of kidney malformation as well as death and stunted growth in the offspring of mice exposed to low doses of cannabis during pregnancy. Other studies indicate that the genetic risks involved with "normal" use of marijuana probably exceed that of exposure to sublethal levels of radiation.

Ten states have decriminalized marijuana, reducing the offense to a civil violation or misdemeanor with maximum fines of from $100 to $250. Evidence is mounti g that, contrary to predictions by dr,ug-use proponents, marijuana use significantly :increases after decriminalization. In Oregon there has been a 35 percent increase in :usage in the 18-to-29 age group, and a 255 percent increase in marijuana seizures.

No statistics have been collected on the 14-to-18 age group where the most dramatic increase is believed to have taken place. Decriminalizing marijuana conveys the powerful message that our society has accepted the use of marijuana as respectable and safe. It is neither. Our laws should encourage the protection not the abuse of "the incredible machine."

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