

March 30, 1970

Mr. Emanuel Perlmutter
New York Times
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Perlmutter,

Your article reporting Representative Ottinger's plan to introduce a bill ". . . to Fight Youth Addiction" (NYT 3/29, pg. 61) is misleading in associating reports of heroin and hashish under a single addiction heading. The report describes a program to control heroin addiction; includes, without a break, a report on arrests for hashish; and concludes with a report of two deaths ascribed to heroin overdose.

The sandwiching of hashish between two stories of heroin under a single addiction title associates two disparate drugs under one opprobrious title, and is not up to the professed standards of the New York Times.

1. Hashish is not heroin, is not an opiate, is not dependence producing, and has distinct pharmacology, chemistry and effects on tissues (references may be supplied). One could make as good a case for associating ethyl alcohol and opiates, as cannabis and opiates.

2. There is no proven biological association between the two drugs. All associations are legal and social.

3. The confusion engendered by equating the two drug classes encourages misinterpretations by the public. Lawyers responsible for laws equate cannabis and opiates (see the Omnibus Drug Bill passed by the Senate). Marijuana users are reported to try heroin with its attending risks of addiction when marijuana importation is curtailed. Criminal penalties for the abuse of the two drugs are often confused.

Sincerely yours,

Max Pink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry

MF:kp

bcc: A. O. Sulzberger

Your staff may be encouraged to review the differences in drugs with some scientists. I imagine a seminar in clinical pharmacology would be useful. It can be arranged.