

November 11, 1968

Dr. Stanley Yolles  
Director  
National Institutes of Mental Health  
5454 Wisconsin  
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Dear Stan,

Separately, I have written regarding the difficulty we have had in obtaining supplies of marijuana through legal channels for research purposes. The climate which encourages this complex bureaucratic limitation of studies in this important public health problem encourages me to write regarding an important associated problem.

During the past two days Dr. Paul Kielholz has lectured at the New York Medical College on the subjects of narcotic addiction and the treatment of depression. In the course of our conversations, he shared with us recent recommendations of the special committee of the World Health Organization, of which he is a member.

The Committee's formulation, as distributed by him, a copy of which is attached, indicates that cannabis has no medical application and that it is to be classed among the habituating compounds.

When I inquired the evidence upon which these two decisions were based, Dr. Kielholz referred me to the well known literature of the past centuries. He made it clear that the Committee had acted without additional significant evidence - surely, none that he could refer me to in the scientific literature.

Considering the difficulties which already enshroud research in marijuana and the cannabinoids, such a pronouncement, especially if accepted by the United States representatives, would ensure a most difficult future for research.

Dr. Yolles

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I am taking the liberty of bringing this to your attention, in the hope that you can refer this information to the appropriate committees of your organization, and perhaps the leading psychiatric associations of our nation, so that this problem can be avoided. I am sufficiently discouraged, to send copies of this letter to the appropriate agencies myself, realizing, however, that such a communication without the political support of offices such as yours, will have little impact.

Thank you for any actions which may assist in relieving this potentially serious interference with research in an important public health problem.

My best personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.  
Professor of Psychiatry

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