

J. Sandy

May 31, 1966

Senator Robert F. Kennedy
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Kennedy:

The present wave of anxiety and panic with regard to abuse of LSD apparently has led a number of legislators to consider severe restrictions for the study of this compound. Following the newspaper reports, I am writing to commend and endorse your efforts at a balanced approach to the problem of the abuse of such compounds.

Since 1953, in a variety of clinical and neurophysiological studies, LSD has been one of many experimental compounds whose role in the treatment of the mentally ill has been studied in laboratories for which I have had responsibility both in New York and Missouri. LSD has been an interesting compound with some unique effects, and recently its specific therapeutic value in the treatment of severe schizophrenic patients has been described. In these studies, the administration of LSD never seemed more dangerous or more complicated in its management than many of the other experimental compounds under study. Indeed, in the severe mentally ill it has appeared to be unusually safe. We recently reviewed our experiences with single and multiple administration of LSD in dosages ranging from one to five gamma per kilogram (100-900 gamma) and noted that our subjects tolerated these administrations very well. The only untoward effect observed has been a prolonged reaction of increased psychotic quality, and this has been observed in three instances. The incidence of prolonged reaction in this population is less than 2%.

Despite the risks involved and the apparent lack of specific therapeutic applications, to interdict further study of this compound would provide a dangerous precedent. In laboratory investigations, under the controls usually available in medical research centers, the likelihood of abuse is small. I would urge, therefore, that you and your committee continue your investigations and that every effort

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be made not to develop blanket curtailing of studies of this, or other hallucinogenic or experimental compounds.

Incidentally, the comments ascribed to you in the press regarding Dr. Leary seem most appropriate. Dr. Leary has done much to denigrate responsible experimental research.

Please accept these comments as support for your quoted position with regard to this difficult public health problem.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry

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