

Letter

November 3, 1972

Editor  
JAMA  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Dr. Hussey,

I have taken the liberty of writing a formal letter to the *Journal* in reply to the cautions raised by Jaffe and his co-workers last week.

The issue of further study of long acting methadols is an important one, for while neither methadone nor the methadols provide a realistic solution to opiate dependence, the methadols may reduce the amount of illicit opiates freely available in the community, thereby reducing the hazards of death and increasing spread of illicit opiate use.

I believe the *Journal* should provide editorial leadership to the profession. To the knowledgeable reader, the cautions expressed by Jaffe *et al.* suggest that the leaders in Washington will slow down the development of these compounds, using the need for more extensive animal and human studies before more extensive trials can be undertaken as a legitimate and self-reassuring rationalization. Indeed, that is the reason why the authors selected the unusual step of including a section of opinion in their report, labelled *Every Silver Lining is Attached to a Cloud*.

The ultimate solutions for opiate dependence do not lie in methadone nor in the acetylmethadols; but for the immediate future, the hazards of methadone must be weighed not against some ideal but against the realities of these long acting methadols. In our hands, the methadols seem sufficiently safe and sufficiently important as a replacement for methadone that every effort should be made to encourage this development.

Your editorial review is solicited.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.  
Profesor of Psychiatry