

altogether a bad thing; for it can be turned around to good purposes. I think that most of us would agree that small amounts of obesity, 5 to 10 pounds overweight, does not matter much, and a lot of our obsession with slimness is a question of fashion more than with health. There is no doubt, however, that people who are 20 percent or more overweight, have a higher incidence of all kinds of problems. There is a health aspect to this kind of obesity. To remedy this kind of obesity, some kind of lasting motivation is necessary.

If I may, I would like to move into the question of a methodology of thinking about drugs. In medicine and in pharmacology, we tend to think of them as a medical scientist would, but I fully realize that is perhaps no longer enough.

We have recently been faced with all sorts of drug problems, involving drugs of licit and illicit origin and we are still concerned with alcohol, cannabis, many drugs which have their origin with illicit manufacturers—amphetamines—although many are not of illicit origin but rather diversions from originally legal sources. I thought I would try to devise a method of looking at the social impact of drugs. In some cases, drugs as a family, and sometimes as individual drugs such as cannabis. I first took a look at benefits of the drug's availability. Of course, for many people, drugs do not have just medical benefits, but possess what they regard as recreational benefits.

For example, alcohol does more harm to our society than any other drug, but prohibiting its use was a social failure. Obviously our culture claims that in alcohol use there are recreational benefits.

I have set down a number of questions about the availability of drugs made available to the public directly; or available through the practice of a physician's prescription. Does it cure anything? Or does it provide only temporary relief of a discomfort? Does this drug interfere with other drugs that may have to be taken, or even with dietary substances?

Does it lack idiosyncratic or unpredictable reactions?

How beneficial are the effects when compared with the toxicity? This is an important feature when one considers antiobesity amphetamine-type drugs.

Is it reasonably priced on the market? Are there any social benefits, or just various degrees of intoxication, when this drug is used?

With regard to risks, I decided to look at it from several points of view. The first concerns various aspects of health. Does it impair learning abilities, life skills, and formal education? Does it impair brain function in any way?

Does it lead to undesirable consequences of a chronic sensory deprivation? What does it do to us as a society if a high proportion of us shield ourselves from the "harsh" realities of life?

Does it cause any other kinds of organic problems, for example, liver, kidneys, and so forth?

Does it affect nutrition as alcohol does?

Is it likely to be lethal if taken in overdose? What are the long-term effects if this drug is used in recreation?

From the viewpoints of personal and public safety, does it lead to any kind of deviant behavior? Does it lead to aggressive behavior—including sexual aggression? Does it lead to any form of violent behavior?