

To the Editor:

The recent news relative to the C.I.A. experiments with LSD and the subsequent unfortunate suicide of Frank Olson further muddies the waters with respect to the dangers of the drug in the minds of the public just when fears were beginning to subside. Interest in the psychedelic drugs have been starting to revive among knowledgeable and thoughtful people.

Without passing judgment on the C.I.A. short of possessing all the facts on the matter, may I point out that suicide triggered by LSD is exceedingly uncommon. In a review of several thousand cases of ingestion by normals in controlled research, Dr. Sydney Cohen found no suicides, and among mental patients only one in 2,500 cases. In a study several years ago, reported in *Psychology Today*, I discovered not only very few suicides ascribed to the LSD-type drugs by doctors and researchers but that reports of the *alleviation* of suicidal impulses clearly outnumbered the suicides. These facts developed few headlines.

In another study, about to be published, I found that researchers familiar with the LSD-type drugs have rated the drugs' promises very high. Almost as tragic as the Olson suicide will be its airing in the news media. This will make it difficult for the drugs soon to regain that level of responsible and careful research so necessary a forerunner to their achieving this promise.

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