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COVER: Replacement of the wire mesh surface of Arecibo Observatory's 1,000-foot radio telescope dish with new aluminum panels is to begin about the end of January. The sensitivity of the instrument will be vastly improved. See p. 425. (Photo: NSF)

Publisher	E. G. Sherburne Jr.
Editor	Kendrick Frazier
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Advertising	Scherago Associates, Inc. 11 W. 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10036 Fred W. Dieffenbach Sales Director

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Subscription Department
231 West Center Street
Marion, Ohio 43302

Subscription rate: 1 yr., \$10; 2 yrs., \$18; 3 yrs., \$25. (Add \$2 a year for Canada and Mexico, \$3 for all other countries.) Change of address: Four to six weeks' notice is required. Please state exactly how magazine is to be addressed. Include zip code.

Printed in U.S.A. Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C. Established as Science News Letter® in mimeograph form March 13, 1922. Title registered as trademark U.S. and Canadian Patent Offices.

Published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 1719 N. St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. (202-785-2255). Cable SCIENSERV.

december 30, 1972

to the editor

Addicted doctors

The conclusion drawn from the Lipp-Benson study on marijuana use among physicians (SN: 11/18/72, p. 322) is very puzzling in view of older information on the physician-addict and recent action by the American Medical Association.

As Meyers, Jawetz and Goldfien point out (*Review of Medical Pharmacology*, Los Altos, Calif.: Lange Medical Publications, 1970-2nd edition, p. 247) meperidine also known as Demerol has been the addictive drug which doctors and nurses are most likely to misuse. Meperidine unlike marijuana is a narcotic analgesic of intermediate potency. Its use among medical personnel proliferated because of early unsubstantiated claims and availability factors.

The American Medical Association recently voted to take strong action to protect the public against a significant problem of drug addiction, alcoholism and mental disorders among physicians. AMA recommendations could lead to the loss of medical licenses by such sick doctors.

In evaluating both marijuana and meperidine use among physicians, I can only conclude that possession of an M.D. does not guarantee wise personal drug use.

June LoGuirato
Clifton, Va.

Science and social policy

"Social science, social policy and 'unfounded generalizations'" (SN: 11/25/72,

p. 343) demonstrates the inability of social scientists to draw reasonable conclusions. Statistical significance, theoretical importance, practical importance and importance to social policy are separate considerations, yet each can be derived from relevant data.

Few things are exactly the same, so one ought to be able to show *some* difference in intelligence between blacks and whites. Such a difference will be statistically significant if the sample size is large enough. But the difference is clearly small compared to the total variation of intelligence in our society, and intelligence is only one aspect of capability. Social policy today does not favor eugenics, but if it did, there are a thousand and one obvious bases for its practice and more fruitful factors for research!

Busing has been defined as a constitutional requirement, even if useless. *All* research shows that busing has not been a panacea and that *more* must be done to provide equality of opportunity.

While a moratorium on certain scientific research is negative, psychological and monetary incentives for relevant research are desirable. Such incentives should emphasize that:

- * Human behavior is seldom based on one or two critical factors (if it is, we haven't found them).
- * Solutions to major social problems require major efforts (not the hiring of an occasional bus driver).
- * Since such major efforts are costly (in human and monetary resources) social experimentation should be done on the basis of small-scale intensive projects.
- * Since any major social program would be expensive, one practical aspect of social experimentation must include maximization of cost-effectiveness.

Lawrence E. Langdon
Anaheim, Calif.

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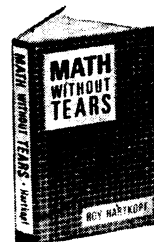
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