

PREFACE

The Beckley Foundation is organizing a series of seminars to address the issue of drugs in society from a multidisciplinary perspective. The first such seminar (Seminar 1), organized in conjunction with Professor Colin Blakemore FRS of Magdalen College, Oxford and Professor Leslie Iversen FRS of King's College, London was held at Magdalen College on 22 October, 2002.

The aim of the series is to encourage a rational overview of the scientific, medical, social and economic issues surrounding the use and abuse of drugs, illicit and legal. Everyone agrees that more informed debate is required as the basis of any further change in attitude and policy. These seminars will therefore bring together leading experts from a wide range of disciplines to examine the latest scientific and professional evidence on:

- The effects of different drugs on the brain, behaviour and health.
- The effectiveness of different methods of informing and educating the public (particularly young people) about drugs and their consequences.
- Issues in the prevention and treatment of addiction, including the relative merits of education and rehabilitation versus penalties and incarceration.
- The likely consequences of decriminalisation and/or legalisation, including issues of regulation and control, implications for public health, law and order and the economy.

Participants at Seminar 1, which was chaired by Professors Blakemore and Iversen, included representatives from the fields of neuroscience, health, education, law-enforcement and policy-making. This Conference Proceedings document summarizes their presentations and the discussions that followed.

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