

PREFACE

This seminar, *An Interdisciplinary Perspective On Alcohol And Other Recreational Drugs*, is the third in a series entitled *Society & Drugs: A Rational Perspective*. The Beckley Foundation organized this seminar in collaboration with the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, with invaluable help provided by Professor David Nutt. The Beckley Foundation would also like to thank Lord Wilson of Dinton and Sir Michael Rawlins for chairing the morning and afternoon sessions.

The Beckley Foundation was grateful for the invitation to hold the seminar in Admiralty Arch at the heart of government, and hopes that the information provided by the speakers will be of some help to the Strategy Unit in their difficult task of developing the National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.

The aim of the series is to encourage a rational overview of the scientific, medical, social and economic issues surrounding the use of drugs, both legal and illegal. Everyone agrees that more informed debate is required as the basis for any further change in attitude and policy. These seminars bring together leading experts from a wide range of disciplines to examine the rigorous 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 the consequences of their use;
- * issues in the prevention and treatment of addiction, including the relative merits of education and rehabilitation versus penalties and incarceration;
- * the likely consequences of changes in legislation, and their implications for public health, law and order, and the economy.

Participants at this seminar included representatives from the fields of neuroscience, health, education, the law, and policy-making. This Conference Proceedings document summarises the presentations and the discussions that followed. We thank all those involved in organizing the seminar and in the preparation of the Proceedings.

Amanda Neidpath and Colin Blakemore

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