



Cannabis warning

Sir, Your leading article (Sep 1) talks approvingly of countries that have decriminalised drugs and calls for Britain to think “more creatively” about illicit drug use.

There is a misconception that consuming cannabis is an innocuous pastime. France’s recent experience serves as a warning. It has the highest consumption in Europe and has seen a 133 per cent increase in admissions to emergency units in children under the age of six with inadvertent intoxication. Thirty-two of these children were in a coma. There was a twentyfold increase in more severe cases between 2004 and 2014, and a 312 per cent increase in requests to national poison centre advice.

This picture is mirrored in the United States, where there has been a 30 per cent increase year on year in admissions to emergency units as a result of cannabis use. In several states where cannabis has been legalised, regulation has been introduced to dispense cannabis in childproof containers.

In the northeast of England some years ago we had a minor epidemic of accelerated emphysema in young men, to such an extent that “Do you smoke cannabis?” is the first question I ask now when I see a case of bullous emphysema in a 30-year-old.

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