

# Monkeys going to pot for NCSU scientist

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A Raleigh research scientist is turning his attention from LSD in spiders to marijuana in monkeys.

Dr. Peter Witt gained widespread recognition from his experiments on how drugs effect spiders and the webs they weave. Skylab II even took along a couple of Witt's spiders to see what kinds of webs they make in space.

Now Witt is going to help turn some rhesus monkeys into marijuana users.

The purpose of the study, financed through a \$154,000 grant from the National Institute of Mental Health, is to observe how users react with other users and with non-users.

Then the users will have their supply shut off. Their resulting behavior will be studied.

"The research is really pioneer work. It's something never investigated before," said Witt, director of the research section of the State Division of Mental Health Services.

Witt will team with Dr. John Vandenberg, the principal investigator and an animal research scientist. Vandenberg will work with the monkeys, which will be kept on an island in Puerto Rico. Witt will study films of the monkeys sent to Raleigh.

Monkeys were chosen "because they are close to humans and can be put in cages," Witt said.

The researchers plan to have four colonies of 20 monkeys each. "They will be mothers, fathers, children, aunts and uncles. We want to see, for example, how a mother who is a chronic abuser reacts to her child and others and also how she reacts when the marijuana is taken away," Witt said.

Witt said changes in behavior are expected, but what kind and how severe aren't known. "We expect to see visible changes. If we can draw conclusions, it will open our eyes to human subjects and behavior," he said.