The dangers of using Ecstasy are not documented, because the drug is relatively new. However, nerve damage is suspected because of the similarity in chemical structure to the parent drug MDA, which destroys nerve terminals in the brain, affecting motor functions and thought processes.

"It has methylamphetamine in it, which is addictive in itself," said Tony Montoya of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in Dallas. "I would venture to say it's psychologically addictive to people who tend toward the addiction of drugs."

Because it is a mood enhancer, Montoya said, people under the influence of Ecstasy have suicidal or homicidal feelings that might kill themselves or someone else.

When the Drug Enforcement Administration announced May 31 that possession of Ecstasy would be banned, protests were issued by psychiatrists and psychologists who said their clients who used the drug in therapy had undergone remarkable progress.

The so-called "designer" drug, a chemical derivative of the regulated drug methylaminedoxymphetamine, will be legal until July 1 when a federal ban takes effect.

"That's the same sort of thing you'll hear about LSD and even Valium when they first came out," Montoya said. "These people think they can control the use of the drug in a patient by reading the person's mind, and that's just not a valid concept.

"There's a potential for harm and addiction any time we tell someone a drug is going to go to the root of their problem. The tend to say, 'I'm going to take it, and my problems are going to go away. My doctor's helping me.'"

One user, who also sells the drug, said fears about the effects of Ecstasy are inflated.

"I don't think it's hurt anybody," he said. "When are these people going to realize that with all these freedoms the Constitution guarantees, it needs to have the right to privacy as you see fit?"

"Sure, there's a few people who have done some bizarre things while using it, but these are the guys who take four hits and fall. That's the same ones who walk into a bar and drink 12 shots of tequila in a row."

at Lemon Avenue and the Dallas North Tollway, spoke from his office Friday on the condition that he not be identified. He said that when his store began selling the drug May 2, his venture had a $40,000 to $50,000 debt.

"We're now operating in the black, and that's strictly from Ecstasy," he said. "In May, we averaged about 1,000 sales a week at $20 a hit. I can't give you the figures for June, because I don't have my sales tax receipts back from the state comptroller's office. It has diminished, through, with more people selling it."

"When we were first approached by the guy dealing with the lab in California, we were told it was made with statute, pure and so on. I can't tell you what makes it, because I don't know now, they're all tight-lipped. The salesman is very tight-lipped. They did tell us that if we didn't sell it for $20, they would not sell to us again; they wanted total price control."

"All I know that depends on the wholesale price, which can be from $8 to $10 per unit, and we buy in 1,000-unit packages -- we have up to a 100 percent profit."

With business booming, a cleared debt and no legal ramifications, the shop operator said he has no qualms about selling Ecstasy.

"We really had no idea what it was going to take off like it did, and it wasn't until later that we heard what it really was," he said. "By that time, sales were phenomenal. We sell the best stuff -- there's five or six types, and they tend to make people sick to their stomachs -- and people love it.

"You'd be surprised how many straight people keeps coming here just to buy it. A lot of them want it because they've never used drugs simply because it's against the law, and here's their chance to experiment with no chance of repercussions, and they know this is the place to get it. And I have several multiples, people who buy large quantities to sell in places like Arlington, marking the price up about $5."

"Until it's illegal, it's nothing to me to sell it. I am not a drug dealer, I'm just running a business."

Regarding surplus inventory, the shop operator said he is not buying any more of the drug than he thinks he'll sell and has specific plans for ceasing the venture.

"I'm not even going to mess with June 30 (Sunday)," he said. "On June 29, I'm closing 30 minutes early and clearing all the..."