

Marijuana is the most
widely used illicit
drug,



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Marijuana when used in the medical sense is beneficial to not only the patients health but to their financial status as well. In this report youll see many reasons why we believe this.

Medical marijuana is used in many treatments. We are not obviously the only people who believe this either. In the last 20 years, 36 states have passed some form of legislation recognizing the medical value of marijuana. In 1996, voters in both Arizona and California passed laws allowing the medical use of marijuana. In 1998 Alaska, Washington and Oregon passed medical use marijuana laws, and in 1999 Maine passed a similar law (Grinspoon, 5). The chronic effects of marijuana are of greater concern for medical use and fall into two categories: the effects of chronic smoking, and the effects of THC. Marijuana smoking is associated with abnormalities of cells lining the human respiratory tract. Marijuana smoke, like tobacco smoke, is associated with increased risk of cancer, lung damage, and poor pregnancy outcomes.

It is the most widely used illicit drug, marijuana is predictably the first illicit drug most people Although studies all suggest that marijuana smoke is an important risk factor for the development of respiratory cancer, proof of this is yet to be seen (Iverson, 21). Marijuana is not a completely benign substance. However, except for the harms associated with smoking, the adverse effects of marijuana use are within the range of effects tolerated for other medications. The harmful effects to individuals from the perspective of possible medical use of marijuana are not necessarily the same as the harmful physical effects of drug abuse (Iverson, 24).

For most people, the primary adverse effect of acute marijuana use is diminished psychomotor performance. It is, therefore, inadvisable to operate any vehicle or potentially dangerous equipment while under the influence of marijuana, THC, or any cannabinoid drug with comparable effects (Zimmerman, 45). A minority of marijuana users experience dysphoria, or unpleasant feelings. THC is the primary psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. Cannabinoids are the group of compounds related to THC, whether found in the marijuana plant, in animals, or synthesized in chemistry laboratories. Cannabinoids likely have a natural role in pain modulation, control of movement, and memory. The natural role of cannabinoids in immune systems is likely multifaceted and remains unclear.

The brain can and will develop a tolerance to cannabinoids after a prolonged use of marijuana (Joy). Animal research has shown the possibility that dependence will occur, but this possibility is much lower than the chance of developing a dependence on benzodiazepines, opiates, cocaine, or nicotine. Withdrawal symptoms have also been seen in animal testing. The symptoms are much milder than the symptoms of withdrawal from some prescribed medications such as Valium and Codeine (Mathre, 25). Chemotherapy can often prolong someone's life for many years. In some cases, a complete cure can be obtained. Unfortunately, chemotherapy has many side effects associated with it that are not pleasant in the least bit.

Patients sometimes find these effects so distressing they abandon chemotherapy entirely. People with AIDS (Acquired Immune Disease) also experience these problems (Zimmerman, 59). Studies with marijuana have shown that marijuana reduces the nausea and vomiting often associated

with chemotherapy treatments. Because the marijuana does this, it provides two other benefits.

The patient is able to retain food and maintain body strength and he or she can tolerate the chemotherapy treatments for a longer amount of time in order to live longer (Mathre, 68). In September 1988, the chief administrative law judge of the Drug Enforcement Administration ruled that marijuana has medical value in the treatment of side effects caused by cancer chemotherapy. His decision was over-ruled by the administrator of the DEA and marijuana remained illegal for medical purposes until recently (Grinspoon, 16). Glaucoma is another illness that marijuana has been shown to help. Glaucoma can strike people of all ages but is most often found among those over 65.

The most common form of glaucoma is chronic or open-angle glaucoma. The symptoms of glaucoma include pressure within the eye, intraocular pressure or IOP, which can cause damage to the optic nerve if it is not controlled effectively. A 30% drop in eye pressure has been found in glaucoma patients when