

Is marijuana
dangerous to your
physical health?
essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Recreational use of marijuana has been going on for many years, and like cigarettes many people refuse to listen to health reports. More and more reports are coming out on the effects of marijuana on the body. Just how harmful marijuana can be is questionable. Some health reports state that it is very detrimental to the body while others are explaining how chemicals extracted from the marijuana plant are being used as medication. The problem is, just what are the effects, and how bad is it for someone who uses this drug? I have picked this topic because I am very interested in the effects of marijuana on the body.

It is commonly known that marijuana is a widely used drug. Many movies depict people having a great time, smoking marijuana, and laughing as hard as they can. But is this really what is behind the drug? Without looking at health reports, one may think so. If so many people use it, how can it be bad for you? After seeing so much positive feedback about marijuana, it would really be nice to see just what is behind this mysterious plant. In this paper, the researcher will explore whether or not marijuana is harmful to your physical health.

It will be shown that marijuana is popular and that many people may not know what they are taking into their bodies.

It will be shown just what parts of the body marijuana affects and how it affects them. The main purpose of this collection of information is to see just what marijuana does to the body and to determine whether the effects are good, bad, or a combination of both. Many different areas of research will be used. The report " Marijuana Retains Popularity Despite Anti-drug Attitudes"

in The Dallas Times Herald by the Associated Press shows just how popular marijuana remains despite health warnings. A 40-something woman referred to as Ruth has a little something to say.

“ It’s a very nice high,” she said. “ Often in these drug stories, people forget to mention that part” (The Associated Press, A-6).

Ruth is among the 17 million Americans who use marijuana regularly. Part of the reason for marijuana’s popularity is its cheap price.

John, a scientist who uses the drug says an ounce can cost him from \$40 to \$100 (The Associated Press, A-6). Another reason for its popularity that is that “ the cops basically ignored it” a few years ago, said Bill FitzGerald, of the County Attorney’s Office (The Associated Press, A-6). Today, the county boasts a “ Do Drugs, Do Time” program targeting all drug users (The Associated Press, A-6). “ Marijuana: Is there a new reason to worry?”, an article in the March 88 issue of American Health by Winifred Gallagher had a lot to say about just what parts of the body marijuana effects.

The majority of the effects of marijuana are caused by a chemical called THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol).

Marijuana, when smoked, enters the body through the lungs and is passed to the blood stream. According to Doctor Billy Martin, a professor of pharmacology at the Medical College of Virginia, THC seems to turn on a number of biological systems (Gallagher, 92). Harvard’s Dr. Norman Zinberg studied a group of marijuana smoker and concluded that “ essentially,

marijuana doesn't cause psychological problems for the occasional user" (Gallagher, 92).

Heavy use however, is thought to create a lack of motivation, or commonly called "burn-out". New York Hospital's Millman prefers the term "aberrant motivation" to describe the inert attitude of some heavy smokers" (Gallagher, 92). "The Health Hazards of Marijuana," a report in the September 1990 issue of *World & I* by Gabriel G. Nahas was very informative on the damage caused by marijuana. Marijuana affects memory and behavior.

"Marijuana really interferes with short-term memory," says Dr.

Richard Schwartz of Georgetown University, and memory loss is one of the main problems with kids who smoke pot" (Nahas, 287). Marijuana also affects the immune system. Guy Cabral of the Medical College of Virginia reported that THC impairs the competence of cells to destroy virus infected cells and tumor cells (Nahas, 293). Marijuana also has devastating effects on human mental development, and cause mental disorders. An article in *Science News* on February 20, 1988 by Rick Weiss called "Take Two Puffs and Call Me in the Morning" had something completely different to say. In the U.S., scientists have discovered that marijuana can ease the nausea from chemotherapy in cancer patients. "Marijuana's use in reducing nausea appears to be quite widespread..."

" (Weiss, 123). Marijuana is also in use by people who suffer from glaucoma. " Marijuana lowers the pressure that build up behind the eyes as a result of having glaucoma" (Weiss, 122).

It was also discovered that there are several receptor sites in the brain that control motor functions, learning and memory. Hence, marijuana may be useful in treating a problem in many of those areas. Based on the information gathered, I have concluded that the effects of marijuana on the body are very detrimental.

Marijuana's effects on memory and the immune system can be very disastrous. For someone still in school, a good memory is needed, along with much motivation. Marijuana attacks both of these elements in the body and can really hurt a hard working student. It seems however, most of the complications that were brought up occur mostly in heavy, chronic users. I am sure that along with these complications, the same complications as with cigarette smoking come up. Occasional use of marijuana doesn't seem to cause many problems.

However, as with any drug, the user can become accustomed to its use and not be able to function properly.

So even occasional use can lead to disaster. Marijuana effects many different parts of the body in many ways. Being that marijuana is fat-soluble, it can remain in the body for over 4-weeks after use. Researchers are unable to determine what the chemicals are doing to the body while they remain there over this period of time.

This just proves that there is much more research to be done, and that in the future it may be seen that marijuana is much more dangerous than even shown in this paper. As for using marijuana as medicine, I think the same goes as above. A lot more research has to be done on the side effects of THC before any real use can be done.

There have been many drugs up to now that have seemed useful, but in the end have caused more harm to the body than good.

Health Implications I think that marijuana use affects myself and my peers very much. As I go to parties and the such, it can be seen that drug use is around, no one can deny it. Its scary to see just what some people are doing to themselves, and they don't even know it. I think that if some of the marijuana users took some time to read this, and many of the other reports on the effects of marijuana, they would think twice before lighting up next time.

Maybe they will wonder just what harm they have done to their body already.

Many people that smoke marijuana have the effects that are discussed in this paper. Its can plainly be seen, their lack of motivation and kind of "spaceyness" that is commonly associated with marijuana smoking. I often wonder what these people would be like if they stopped their use and allowed themselves to rid their body of the THC and its by-products.

Marijuana use is still very popular throughout the United States, and the fact that people are not educated enough about its effects is very detrimental.

These people are hurting themselves, and they don't know (and many just don't care) what they are doing to their bodies. If marijuana use was to grow too much, we may have a country of unmotivated people, with many more health problems due to their immune deficiencies. Where will we be then?

Works Cited

The Associated Press, " Marijuana retains popularity despite anti-drug attitudes", Dallas Times Herald, p. A-6, November 18, 1990.

Gallagher, Winifred, " Marijuana: Is there a new reason to worry?", American Health, p. 92-104, March 1988. Nahas, Gabriel G., " The Health Hazards of Marijuana", World & I, p.

286-293, September, 1990. Weiss, Rick, " Take Two Puffs and Call Me in the Morning", Science News, p. 122-123. February 20, 1988, Vol 133. No. 8.