

# The positive and negative effects of marijuana

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Marijuana is a very controversial issue with a lot of information being spread around, both for and against it. The subject of marijuana affects everyone whether they know it or not due to the millions of tax dollars that have been fruitlessly spent on the drug war and marijuana prohibition, with almost no conclusive impact on cannabis culture.

The truth about marijuana needs to be brought to light so that people can decide, with an educated opinion, whether or not the positive effects of marijuana outweigh the negative. Between the anti-drug activists, who would say anything to make marijuana seem like an evil life taking tool, and the pro-drug activists, who seem to think that it is a plant that was sent down from the heavens to save mankind, the actual facts and data can get quite distorted and warped. Therefore in the end it's hard to separate the fact from the fiction. More and more, you see new stories about marijuana legalization with activists from both sides arguing their case. The battle has really been coming to a head in the last few years and I believe that the decision of marijuana legalization will be made in my lifetime; so it is a very relevant topic to me, and to my generation as well. The truth needs to be heard.

I have gathered and examined multiple reliable sources and studies, as well as pulled from my own personal experience with the drug to put together the true picture of marijuana. The positive effect findings from my first source were fairly typical for what one may have heard about the drug. Some of which being: feeling relaxed, feeling happy, getting munchies (could also be considered negative), increased enjoyment of music and art, more appreciation of the surroundings, forgetting cares and worries, better

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imagination and visualization, increased creativity, as well as more enjoyment of sexual activity and increased feelings of excitement (Hammersley, R, ; Leon, V. 2006). The negative effects findings were also pretty typical for what one may have heard which would include: being forgetful, over sleeping, not getting things done, concentration difficulties, neglecting work or duties, loss of balance or dizziness, problems with performing tasks, and nausea (Hammersley, R, ; Leon, V.

2006). From these findings several facts were concluded. The main conclusion seems to be that if used casually marijuana's positive effects outweigh the negative; the source states that " Cannabis users generally enjoyed it and found it beneficial to them, but they put up with sometime disturbances of cognitive function and mood, the latter including disorientation, depression and anxiety (paranoia)" (Hammersley, R, & Leon, V. 2006). They found that in casual users the effects, either positive or negative, only lasted during the time of intoxication and sometimes during the following day, and that as long as the use remained casual rather than heavy the effects would not become problematic. However, if use increased and effects became more chronic than effects may begin causing problems.

Also in this study the health risks of marijuana were examined. It was discovered that the risks of smoking cannabis were different, and perhaps even lesser, than those of smoking tobacco; furthermore it was found that due to the large amount of individuals smoking marijuana combined with tobacco, statistics describing marijuana dependency may have been inflated, by the fact that it was the nicotine in tobacco that people were becoming dependent on rather than actual cannabis itself. The study also stated that <https://assignbuster.com/the-positive-and-negative-effects-of-marijuana/>

near-daily use was more likely to cause problems and was discouraged (Hammersley, R, & Leon, V. 2006). My second source dealt mostly with the medical aspects of marijuana, but this data is still important for people to know and be aware of. In this study, patients with various medical problems were treated with THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), the main active ingredient in marijuana, and it was found to treat a wide range of various ailments such as: Tourette-Syndrome, appetite loss, weight loss, nausea, depression, HIV-infection, migraines, asthma, back pain, hepatitis C, sleeping disorders, epilepsy, spasticity, headaches, alcoholism, glaucoma, disk prolapse, spinal cord injury, as well as improving the well being of cancer patients (Grotenhermen, 2002).

It did not go into to detail about how cannabis was able to help with these symptoms, but it did back the results up with various other studies that all showed the same results, so I feel safe in saying that marijuana can be used for medicinal purposes, which is a major plus for the positive effects side. My third source deals with the regular, as well as the medical aspects of marijuana. The study found that despite the many rumors and false reports, cannabis does not, in fact, cause cancer. The study goes on to say that the smoking of the plant, not any chemical of the plant itself, causes a majority of the bodily damage done to the individual smoking the drug. If the individual ingests the plant orally or through a vaporizer it would seem that the risk of any kind of cancer can be greatly reduced, if not eliminated altogether.

Cannabis also has not been seen to be the cause of any other life threatening problems (Janet E. Joy, Stanley J. Watson, Jr., and John A. Benson, Jr.

1999). The study also confirmed many of the medical applications that were discussed in my second source. This study reported similar positive effects as the previous studies: sense of well-being, euphoria, increased talkativeness and laughter, periods of introspective dreaminess, lethargy, and sleepiness. The negative effects were also congruent with the previous studies consisting of: anxiety, paranoia, panic, depression, dysphoria, depersonalization, delusions, illusions, and hallucinations. The study then goes on to mention that the negative and adverse reactions to the cannabis were experienced mostly in “ inexperienced users after large doses of smoked or oral marijuana” (Janet E. Joy, Stanley J.

Watson, Jr., and John A. Benson, Jr. 1999). Another popular threat used by anti-drug activist is that marijuana causes brain damage.

They base this threat on a previous study that was done by the Nixon administration when it began its war on drugs. However, this new study states that “ Early studies purporting to show structural changes in the brains of heavy marijuana users have not been replicated with more sophisticated techniques” (Janet E. Joy, Stanley J. Watson, Jr., and John A.

Benson, Jr. 1999). The “ gateway” theory is also a popular claim made against marijuana. The “ gateway” theory claims that if a person begins using marijuana than they are almost guaranteed to move on to other, harsher drugs. Again this study disagrees, saying that “ It does not appear to <https://assignbuster.com/the-positive-and-negative-effects-of-marijuana/>

be a gateway drug to the extent that it is the cause or even that it is the most significant predictor of serious drug abuse; that is, care must be taken not to attribute cause to association” (Janet E.

Joy, Stanley J. Watson, Jr., and John A. Benson, Jr. 1999). Therefore from all of these studies it can be concluded that the positive effects of marijuana significantly out number and out weigh the negative.

I admit to having personal experience with cannabis, and I can also attest to the positive and negative effects of cannabis. When I was under the influence of marijuana I experienced most of the positive and negative effects. I felt very at ease, but at the same time quite paranoid. I never attempted to work while intoxicated, however I believe that my inability to perform tasks of any sort would be decided by how heavily I had smoked. If I had smoked heavily than my ability would be severely limited, but if I had only done some casual smoking I would have been able to perform simple tasks at least. Overall, each time I was under the influence I strongly believed that the positive effects out weighed the negative, and looking back, un-intoxicated, I still hold the same opinion.