

# Free essay on medical marijuana

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In recent times, the debate whether the medical use of marijuana is ethical has been an ongoing debate. This essay aims at discussing why marijuana should be used for medical purposes. All the benefits have been discussed. The Controlled Substances Act of 1970 classified marijuana as a class 1 drug (Greene, 2006). However, because of the drug being used continuously despite being banned, some states decided to regulate marijuana. They accomplished this by requiring that all marijuana usage be prescribed by a doctor. This meant that using marijuana for recreational purposes would be illegal. The District of Columbia was the first to pass such laws. However, some states have remained adamant, and they have refused to legalize the use of marijuana for medical purposes (Rendall, 2012).

In 2008, experts came across archeological evidence in Central Asia that suggested a prehistoric medicine man was using marijuana for medical purposes 27 000 years ago. Records of medical marijuana use were traced in China, dating back to 2737 BC. It would be wrong to dismiss all the medicine men and doctors that used or still use marijuana for medical purposes as wrong. Despite this notion, there are individuals who refuse to acknowledge the fact that marijuana possesses medicinal attributes that can be tapped into by the medical department to benefit sick individuals (Rendall, 2012). Marijuana possesses chemical properties that are medicinal in nature. The chemicals in marijuana that cause drug like effects to the body are known as cannabinoids. The cannabinoid associated with medicine is tetrahydrocannabinol. The two medically active tetrahydrocannabinols are delta - 9 - THC and cannabidiol. These cannabinoids are known to; block cell growth, be anti - inflammatory agents, prevent the growth of blood cells that

feed tumors and be antiviral. According to Gibbons et al. (2010), it would be ignorant not to use these properties to treat both minor and major ailments due to cheap politics or misperceptions of marijuana (Hall, 2011).

Most prescription drugs that have been accepted in society result in deaths due to their consumption. Each year, an estimated 100 000 patients succumb to death due to consumption of prescription drugs. Unlike most drugs, there have been no report of people dying due to consumption of marijuana while treating medical conditions (Gibbons et al, 2010). The risk of overdosing on marijuana is almost zero as compared to other prescription drugs. This is because the THC content found in marijuana is in very low dosages.

Referring to Gibbons et al (2010), scientific studies involving doctors, patients and medical researchers have tested and proven the medical attributes of marijuana. When the issue comes to using their results to treat patients, the problem arises because of marijuana usage for recreational purposes (Reinarman, Nunberg, Lanthier, & Heddleston, 2011). It is plausible that law enforcers and policy makers are keen on ensuring marijuana abuse is not encouraged. However, such institutions should understand the difference between using marijuana for recreational and medical purposes. When used for medical purposes, it goes into healing some ailments and easing the pain resulting from terminal illnesses in patients. In the spirit of keeping the nation healthy, doctors and patients involved with prescribed marijuana should not be treated like criminals (Hall, 2011).

A number of people assume that using marijuana for medical purposes means smoking the drug without supervision with the pretext of being sick.

What they do not know is that when being used for treatment, marijuana is treated as any other drug. A doctor does not simply go to dark alleys to purchase marijuana to prescribe to patients. Medical marijuana is usually graded, labelled and packed in an orderly manner. Patients are usually prescribed with doctored amounts of marijuana followed by strict instruction on the frequency and amount of consumption (Gibbons et al, 2010).

There have been noted concerns surrounding smoking marijuana as the ingestion means of marijuana for medical purposes. Some studies have associated smoking marijuana with respiratory diseases. People lobbying for discontinuation of medical marijuana often quote these studies. However, it is important to note that medical marijuana do not have to be smoked. Other methods of consumption are available. Medical marijuana can be consumed in its vaporized state. Medical marijuana is also available in forms that are edible. This includes baked forms or in tea. With evolved technology, it may even be possible to make marijuana pills for treating patients. Medical marijuana usage does not automatically mean smoking marijuana for medical purposes (Seamon, et al, 2011).

What most people are not aware of is the fact that even the Food and Drugs Administration department also recognizes the medicinal value in marijuana. As a department entrusted with managing the health of a nation, it has allowed the use of two cannabinoids. These include nabilone and marinol for medical purposes. They are used to treat chemotherapy related nausea and vomiting. Canasol is another marijuana containing drug that is legally distributed in the United States. If marijuana did not possess medicinal properties, none of these drugs would be existing (Seamon, et al, 2011).

There are numerous studies that have proven that using marijuana for medical purposes will bring relief to patients suffering from a wide variety of ailments. These ailments and related studies have been explained.

Individuals that claim to lack scientific support for the use of marijuana for medical purposes should be enlightened about them. Chronic pain is a common occurrence in patients that are experiencing a variety of ailments. This includes scenarios involving cancer, tumors and giving birth. UCSF studies suggest that this pain can be relieved by using cannabinoids to treat the patients.

When cancer patients and other patients are allowed to use marijuana for medical purposes, it saves on their money. Money is often a problem for patients with illnesses that require a lot of medical care and consultations from medical practitioners. For instance, pain relieving injections during or after chemotherapy cost between 285 - 7 000 US Dollars depending on the type of drug used and the dosage. A gram of marijuana is cheaper. Using it for treatment would be a much cheaper option for such patients (Hall, 2011).

The Institute of Medicine in 1999 concluded that the cannabinoid drug found in marijuana can be used by AIDS patients to treat various syndromes such as nausea, appetite loss, pain, and anxiety. Marijuana is not the only drug with this effect but it is the most favorable because it has a more rapid effect and it is delivered to the system within minutes. According to Greene (2006), the other reason why marijuana is the best for treatment according to the study is because not all fast acting drugs work at the same pace with all the patients as compared to marijuana which had a more general effect on most

patients who undertook the study (Hall, 2011).

In October 2006, WebMD Health News reported that THC, which is the key compound in marijuana, may be used to treat Alzheimer's disease. They argued that THC compound found in marijuana prevents the formation of plaques in the brain that are responsible for causing Alzheimer's. They claimed marijuana was in fact a better drug than the current Alzheimer's drugs. This conclusion was made after a test tube study was conducted. The study also showed that there is an unrecognized molecular mechanism which THC uses to directly alter the progression of Alzheimer's. This goes to show that marijuana can help many families with Alzheimer's patients if this mode of treatment is applied. This would save such families from prolonged financial and emotional strain resulting from the disease (Greene, 2006).

Considering all the above explained issues, it is clear that the benefits of using marijuana for medical purposes are numerous. These benefits outweigh the politics, ignorance and misperceptions in society towards medical marijuana. People also confuse medical marijuana with using marijuana for recreational purposes. The above have hindered the process of letting patients use prescription marijuana to treat their ailments. It is time for society to be empowered with knowledge concerning the benefits of using marijuana for its medicinal properties (Reinarman, Nunberg, Lanthier, & Heddleston, 2011). This way everyone can understand how marijuana is a great resource for the medicine community. Individuals will also be able to understand that allowing the use of medical marijuana is a noble move that will save lives, relieve chronic pain and save patients financial status (Hall,

2011). Generally, use of marijuana for its medicinal properties is a plus for society.

## References

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