

Essay on medicinal marijuana

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Why marijuana should be used for treatment in cancer patients to relieve nausea and vomiting, stimulate appetite and discuss their side effects.

For many years, marijuana has been used to treat various ailments. During the 19th and 20th centuries, many journals were published on the medicinal benefits of marijuana. However, its use started declining in the early twentieth century as a result of development of alternative therapies and also due to legislation that put it under controlled substances. Nevertheless, medicinal marijuana is increasingly becoming advocated to help in managing chronic diseases, especially cancer.

There are people with cancer who experience various side effects of the cancer treatment such as nausea and vomiting. Various drugs used to treat cancer affect certain brain cells which control vomiting. These cells cause a person's stomach lining to be irritated. These side effects are different for certain people. It all depends on the timing of the drug-treatment, the dosage given and an individual's body reaction to the drugs. It is very important for the cancer patients to get drugs that minimize the nausea, vomiting and loss of appetite. The management of these side effects is known as supportive cancer care. This area has generated high interest. The patients may take antiemetics drugs to control these side effects but it cannot be said to be the only or the best approach in the industry. There are several factors that affect how a patient may take these drugs such as the type of anti-cancer drugs a person is using, physical attributes such as age (Dupont, 1999).

Numerous studies have shown that smoking of marijuana does not cause cancer. In fact, further studies have shown reduction in certain cancers like

that of the cervix and the lungs as a result of using marijuana. Besides, cannabidiol, one of the compositions of medicinal marijuana has been shown to inhibit the growth of leukemia and cancer of the breast. According to the National Academy of Sciences (1999), “ Marijuana is one of the safest and therapeutically active substances since it contains active components that have potentially proven to manage chronic illnesses like HIV and cancer”. The use of marijuana to control pain has always been a controversial topic and has come under strong opposition from several quarters. Nonetheless, when it comes to cancer patients, its benefits are immense. It is very essential when it comes to controlling pain, relieving nausea and also stimulating appetite. Cancer sufferers experience immense stress, frustrations and it is only themselves or those who are close to them that understand and experience what they go through Marijuana provides a very effective management of the adverse side effects arising out of cancer. Marijuana has been known to suppress and sometimes eliminate the harmful side effects that are brought about by taking the painful cancer medications and hence this allows the patients to sustain treatment and reduce cases of default. It not only reduces the pain, but also expedites the process of healing and helps the patients achieve remission. There is need to support the use of marijuana to treat cancer patients to help in minimizing the obvious adverse effects that occur as a result of chemotherapy treatments. Many cancer patients have resorted to using traditional medicines to relieve their pain. It is therefore imperative that prescriptive marijuana medicine should be made legal to assist these patients get the necessary relief which cannot be provided by other

medicines. Therefore, doctors should be given the authority to decide on the best treatment option for patients, instead of this being done by the government or other interest groups. Besides, the society needs to be made aware of marijuana benefits and change their attitude towards the drug.

More recent research studies have continued to discover new applications for medicinal marijuana in the management of different types of cancers. It is therefore only rational that the current restrictions on the use of marijuana be done away with so as researchers can get an opportunity to conduct large scale clinical trials that may help in understanding the innumerable ways through which these medications can assist patients with cancer.

Marijuana has been used in supportive cancer care through use of different drugs. It has been effective to some certain levels. Two types of the drug are used; there is Dronabinol, which is a synthetic form of the drug. It is a synthetic form of the constituent delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). This drug was approved in 1985 to be used as an antiemetic (National Cancer Institute, 2008). It was to be used by patients who were not responding to the usual antiemetic drugs. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) scientists are of the opinion that other antiemetic drugs are more effective than the synthetic THC (National Cancer Institute, 2008). Examples of these antiemetic drugs are serotonin antagonists which can be used singly or it can be used together with dexamethasone.

The institute believes that the synthetic THC should be used by patients who are not responsive to the other antiemetic drugs. It should be noted that in using the THC the side effects of the Marijuana has to be considered. The dronabinol drug causes a patient to be "high". It makes one feel he has lost

control or is out of reality. Though this aspect of the drug has been associated with its effectiveness it may be highly uncomfortable for some patients. Research has shown that THC is absorbed faster when smoked rather than consumed orally. Various researches have been carried out on the effectiveness of Marijuana and the results have been inconclusive. Between 1975-1996, studies showed that THC is more effective than the common drugs in minimizing vomiting and nausea (Schwartz et al, 1997). It was even discovered that small doses of marijuana increased the appetite of Aids patients. It did warn of possible side effects. The research called for further research into Marijuana. “ Just like, morphine has become widely used in the medicine field to alleviate pain; it is hypocritical for federal authorities to illegalize the use of marijuana to alleviate pain” (Parks, 2010). Another study showed that it was not a more effective drug than other treatments. Further research has recommended the use of marijuana as a suitable treatment in the management of nausea. Interestingly, a recent research showed that there were chemicals in Marijuana that were helpful in preventing nausea. One of the most in-depth study was carried out by U. S government. The institute of Medicine carried out a research and found out that THC does relieve pain, stimulates appetite and controls vomiting and nausea. Thus this just shows the important role medicinal marijuana plays in relieving pain for cancer sufferers.

Furthermore, one of the chemicals in Marijuana that is cannabidiol has been shown to slow the growth of breast cancer cells in the laboratory. Although this test has not been carried out on human beings, further studies are being carried out. Apart from slowing the growth of breast cancer cells, medicinal

marijuana has been proven to be containing anti-bacterial properties that prevent tumors from growing and also enlarge airways hence reducing asthmatic attacks. Although there is need to appreciate the skepticism of some medical professionals on the therapeutic qualities of some substances, it is important that this should be done objectively without the fears and stigma that are related to use of these substances, with marijuana being the major one. This is because “ it is apparent that some opponents may still want to exaggerate the harmful effects of marijuana in their bid to ensure that it is not used for medicinal purposes” (Parks, 2010).

In conclusion, medicinal marijuana is a very effective method of managing the side effects that occur as a result of cancer complications. It is therefore important that it be given support from government the medical fraternity and the public at large since this will go a long way in helping alleviate pain and suffering among cancer patients.

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