

Com 156 assignment 6 week 1

[Health & Medicine](#), [Drugs](#)



Week 6 Assignment 1 COM/156, Lindy Hatten There are several instances of naturally occurring substances that have positive medicinal benefits, which easily outweigh the negative effects of the drugs. Parts of the Cannabis plants are a very obvious example; there are currently seventeen states that have legalized medicinal marijuana for use by patients with a qualifying medical condition that has been evaluated by a physician.

Cannabis is safe and effective at treating peripheral neuropathy, which causes great suffering to HIV/AIDS patients. Cannabis is also very effective in alleviating the pain and nausea caused from many other medical conditions and/or the treatments, such as chemotherapy, which is used to treat many forms of cancer. Recently, the use of cannabis in treatment of hepatitis C also has shown to have alleviating abilities for underlying conditions.

According to a study conducted in 2006 by a research group in northern California, marijuana-using patients were three times more likely to clear the deadly virus from their bodies. Another naturally occurring substance that has shown medicinal benefits in recent clinical trials, conducted in the UK in 2006, is psilocybin, which is found in several types of mushrooms, but most notably the *Psilocybe* genus. Mushrooms containing the psychoactive alkaloids are often referred to as "magic mushrooms" due to their hallucinogenic properties.

Researchers have found that the active chemical in these mushrooms can have curative properties for those who suffer with a very painful form of headaches known as cluster headaches, or as they are sometimes known as suicide headaches, due to the number of suicides amongst sufferers from the high level of pain. The study concluded with the observation, " Our

observations suggest that psilocybin and LSD may be effective in treating cluster attacks, possibly by a mechanism that is unrelated to their hallucinogenic properties.

This report should not be misinterpreted as an endorsement of the use of illegal substances for self-treatment of cluster headaches. " A more recent study lead by Dr. Robert Carhart-Harris concluded that previous results are consistent, and also that psilocybin helped to reduce the amount of activity from the mPFC neurotransmitter, which plays a significant role indepression. The medicinal effects of psilocybin are very similar to several depression treatments available.

While the promise of psilocybin treating these headaches is still a long way away from any sort of legal medical use, this is a step in the right direction. As well as the positive medicinal benefits of several natural drugs, there are positive spiritual aspects of natural drug use. Natural drugs have been used for millennia to alleviated what ancient people believed to be spiritual corruption, as cleansing agents, and as well as a sacrament. Ayahuasca and peyote have been used for thousands of years by hundreds, if not thousands, of different cultures.

Ayahuasca is a psychoactive tea that is made by infusing the plant matter of two or more psychoactive plants. One ingredient contains 5-MeO-DMT (a substance similar to LSD), and the other ingredient contains an MAOI that allows the DMT to be absorbed into the bloodstream. The Quechua people of South America have been known to use it and have used it for thousands of years. They use it as a sacrament in order to become more in tune with

nature and their gods, and believe that it gives the user supernatural abilities of insight and wisdom.

Peyote is another substance that indigenous people of the Americas, more specifically the Navajos, used as a sacrament, and still to this day members of certain Native American tribes use peyote in their religious ceremonies. Responsible, safe, and moderate use can reduce one's risk of addiction and can reduce the debilitating effects of certain drugs. Obviously if you smoke two packs of cigarettes a day, and you were to cut back down to five cigarettes a day, then your risk of heart attack and stroke would decrease.

The same is true for other drugs. While no drug is safe and all are addictive to some extent, moderate and responsible use can greatly reduce the inherent risks that come with some drugs. Responsible drug use also involves knowing about the drugs and what parts of your body they affect, inhibit, and degrade. Responsible users do not use heroin, due to the inherent risks that come with it. It is a highly addictive substance with little medicinal value in the shadow of its volatility.

Safety for drug users is ignored and addicts go untreated and persecuted as criminals rather than people with an illness. In parts of the UK, and other countries in Europe, there are what is known as SISs (Safe Injection Sites), where addicts are given access to clean needles and other sterile equipment in order to decrease the transfer of disease from people sharing needles. This is productive towards the main problem, and the U. S. should take note of this.

These people are going to get their hands on these drugs regardless of their legal status, it is the government's responsibility to protect these people and provide them with safe equipment in order to protect them from disease. Despite the positive medicinal values and spiritual uses of many natural drugs, society has wrongly demonized several natural drugs due to a lack of understanding and misinformation. Anti-marijuana activists and certain government agencies would have you believe that marijuana is a highly addictive substance with no medicinal value, and that the users of the drug are to be considered criminals and addicts.

Harry Anslinger of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, which eventually evolved into the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), created the "Reefer madness" campaign in the 1930s. The use of the Mexican name of the cannabis plant, marijuana, was popularized by the Hearst newspaper chain to scare the public into believing that there was a new and dangerous drug being introduced to American youth by black musicians and Mexicans. The result of this media blitz was the passage of the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937, which was the beginning of marijuana's prohibition.

Since its prohibition, numerous studies have been conducted to determine marijuana's toxicity level: the conclusion of the studies was that it would take 20, 000 to 40, 000 times the normal dose to induce death. Another way of stating this would be that a person would have to ingest 1, 500 pounds in 15 minutes. In 1972, after studying all the evidence, Judge Francis Young of the DEA found marijuana to be "one of the safest therapeutically active substances known to man. He also added that, "One must reasonably conclude that there is accepted safety for use of marijuana under medical

supervision. To conclude otherwise, on the record, would be unreasonable, arbitrary and capricious. " His decision in the case was overruled by the Court of Appeals and medicinal marijuana was still denied even to seriously ill patients, until decades later when states began legalizing medicinal marijuana themselves.