

Marijuana in medical purposes

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The Supreme Court Prohibition on Using Marijuana for Medical Purposes

Marijuana or cannabis have since long ago been a way to " relax", " get some rest" or retrieve from the existing problems. The use of it begins at a very early age, usually from 12 to 17, as the article by Carole Simpson in ABC news states. It has been thought of as a " light" drug for many years, which doesn't call for the chemical and physical dependence, but still cannabis is a drug, and its use, growth, distribution and buying are prohibited by the existing U. S laws.

When in the 90's the doctors found that the use of marijuana can reduce the side effects of the treatment people diagnosed with incurable diseases, like AIDS or cancer receive, like " persistent nausea, vomiting and debilitating pain"(ABC news, 2005), a social movement began for to legalize the use of this drug in medical purposes, in order to relieve the sufferings of the severely ill. Washington, among other 9 states passed the laws that allowed the use of marijuana in medical purposes.

Unfortunately, the so called 6-3 decision of the Supreme Court, announced on the 5th of June overruled the laws existing in those ten states, prohibiting the use of cannabis even for relieving the sufferings of the severely ill people. Actually, it is still not prohibited in Washington area by the state laws as it is not in any of the ten states, except California, but according to this decision, the federal government can prosecute the medical marijuana users for breaking of federal laws.

As 35 years ago, when the current federal drug law was adopted, there wasn't any medical use for cannabis, so it was considered to be the drug with high potential for abuse. It has long been argued by the politicians that the government's " ability to regulate areas that traditionally have been left

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to state and local jurisdiction" (Richey, 2005) should be limited. But the politicians agreed that the use of drugs is not the issue that should be regulated by the states. On the contrary, one of the judges that disagreed with the decision of the majority stated that allowing usage of marijuana on the territory of some states would give the possibility to " try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country".

As you can see, the issue of using marijuana for medical purposes is very controversial, as there is a federal law, which states that the use of this substance in any purposes is punished, but it was adopted before the medical virtues of cannabis were discovered. The laws of the ten states including Washington D. C allow the use of marijuana for relieving the sufferings of the incurably ill people, but the recent decision of the Supreme Court overruled those laws prohibiting it. In the same time the American Constitution states that every citizen of the country has the right to receive medical help, and cannabis is one of the best substances for helping those suffering from AIDS, cancer, tumors etc. But we shouldn't forget that the federal law was designed to protect the citizens from the negative impact of drugs, and the permission to use cannabis opens the perspectives for abuse of this substance. Thus the question emerges, whether the right of the ill human beings to relieve their sufferings is of more importance than the need to protect citizens from drugs is of more weight or vice versa.

The society's negative attitudes towards drugs also benefited considerably to the decision 6-3. In the conscience of most people drugs are associated with something very dangerous and unlawful, and the permission to use those substances even for medical purposes trigger strong negative reaction from the social activists and ordinary citizens. In the same time those people

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whose friends or relatives need marijuana for relieving their sufferings support the pro-marijuana laws.

The use of marijuana for medical purposes is a very controversial issue. When resolving it it's vital to find the acceptable compromise between protection of citizens from the negative effects of drugs and actualizing the rights of the suffering people for proper medical treatment.

Reference

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