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# Medical Marijuana - Can it Cure?

## Medical Marijuana: The New Miracle Medication?

Would you believe that the government is hiding and refusing to admit that there is a safe alternative to the harsh prescription medications? We have reached a point in medical science where we have created medications that can help with almost any pain or symptoms, but those medication have side effects ranging from a headache, to trouble breathing, even death. These medications also range in strength. As an illness or pain gets worse the medication that they give you is more powerful (you wouldn't take oxycodone for a headache but you wouldn't take Tylenol if you got shot). Why would we forbid and demonize an extremely effective completely natural alternative that has very little side effects?

Current research into medical marijuana reveals that it can be used to treat everything from headaches to cancer. Most patients not using marijuana are given several different types of medication one to treat the illness or disease, then sometimes as many as four or five different medications to deal with the side effects of the medication treating the illness. Not only can the medications be harmful to the body, but most are addicting, examples would be oxycodone, benzodiazepine, and morphine. They are so addicting that when someone is prescribed the medication they are almost guaranteed to become addicted to their medications. According to the National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA) "...an estimated 2.4 million people 12 or older met criteria for abuse of or dependence on prescription drugs...". Most of these addicts started taking these drugs because they were prescribed to them. When a patient is taken off of the medication, they have withdrawal symptoms just like someone who takes it illegally. Just because a medication is treating a patient does not take away its addictive properties. These medications are given to almost anyone who needs them including children. Children are given addictive and harmful drugs. Instead, we can use a natural alternative that is not harmful and not addictive.

Marijuana can also treat multiple illnesses at once. If someone has cancer then they can use marijuana as a chemotherapy medication, and a pain medication. The reason for this is what marijuana releases into the body. Marijuana releases cannabinoids, this is the classification of the "active ingredients" of marijuana, there are several different kinds of cannabinoids and the amount of each kind that go into your system will change how it affects your body. Marijuana that has different properties are called different strains. Strains are classified into one of three categories Indica, Sativa, or hybrid. India is used "to relieve stress, provide full-body pain relief, and help them fall asleep at night" (Reichard). While "Sativa are particularly effective in treating mental and behavioral issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, and ADHD" (Reichard). Hybrids are when they cross the genetics of an India and a Sativa, they can have an even mix of the two or one can be dominant, and the mix of these changes how it affects the body, a sativa-dominant hybrid will give the user a cerebral high with a relaxing body effect, it can provide physical pain and mental stress relief. An even hybrids have about even amounts of both in its system. It will normally give a perfect balance of head and body. Lastly there is india-dominant hybrids these strains provide pain relief, with a relaxing head high and can be useful to help patients fall asleep.

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Different cannabinoids change how it affects the body. Two main kinds of cannabinoid are "Delta 9 Tetrahydrocannabinol" or THC and "Cannabidiol" or CBD. THC is known as the psychoactive component (it does still have medical properties), CBD is known mostly as the medical component. CBD can be an Antiemetic, Anticonvulsant, Antipsychotic, Anti-inflammatory, Antioxidant, Anti-tumoral/Anti-cancer, and Anxiolytic/Anti-depressant. It is also known "to reduce the intoxicating effects of THC, such as memory impairment and paranoia"(5 Mus). THC can be used for "pain relief, PTSD, stimulating appetite, nausea, and vomiting, Glaucoma, Asthma, anxiety, and sleep" (7 Pro). For most patients, they need a mixture of the effects of both THC and CBD to help them. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has recently talked about "Studies in mice and rats have shown that cannabinoids may inhibit tumor growth by causing cell death, blocking cell growth, and blocking the development of blood vessels needed by tumors to grow. Laboratory and animal studies have shown that cannabinoids may be able to kill cancer cells while protecting normal cells" (Canna).

This might bring up the question, What does marijuana do to the brain? When we take marijuana into our system it starts to mix into the bloodstream and goes to our brain. Our brains have all kinds of different receptors for processing different chemicals that enter the brain. Cannabinoids are processed through the Endocannabinoid system. The Endocannabinoid system has "Cannabinoid receptors (molecules that bind to cannabinoids) [that] have been studied in the brain, spinal cord, and nerve endings throughout the body of animals..." (Canna). Our body produces chemicals similar to Cannabinoid to give us joy and pain relief that go through the Endocannabinoid system called the Endocannabinoid. This is why it is non-addictive, when cannabinoids are processed they are going through receptors made for the Endocannabinoid, their chemical structures are almost identical. It would be almost the same as getting addicted to dopamine, norepinephrine, or epinephrine. After it goes to the brain it is directed to where the body needs it. For example in a cancer patient the cannabinoids would go through the bloodstream and to the tumor.

To compare the side effects of pain medication let's compare marijuana to oxycodone, the current known side effects by the NCL for marijuana are "Rapid beating of the heart, low blood pressure, muscle relaxation, bloodshot eyes, slowed digestion and movement of food by the stomach and intestines, dizziness, depression, hallucinations, paranoia". The side effects for oxycodone are way too numerous to list here. Here is a small selection "Chills, cold sweats, confusion, difficult or labored breathing, dizziness, faintness, or lightheadedness when getting up suddenly from a lying or sitting position, fever, tightness in the chest, twitching, abdominal or stomach pain, bloating or swelling of the face, arms, hands, lower legs, or feet, blood in the urine, burning while urinating burning, crawling, itching, numbness, prickling, "pins and needles", or tingling feelings, chest pain, convulsions, cough..." (Micromedex). This is not to say that these drugs should not be used to treat patients but that they should have another option than something that is not only addictive, and can cause harm to the human body. Marijuana is not for everyone because it affects everyone's body differently, but this doesn't mean that it shouldn't be an option for those who choose it.

Current politics have marijuana as a schedule one drug, a schedule one drug is defined by the DEA as "substances, or chemicals [that] are defined as drugs with no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse" (DEA /). Marijuana is classified as drugs such as "heroin, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), 4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (ecstasy), methaqualone, and peyote". Each of these drugs has been proven to be harmful to the body and cause addiction and possible death, marijuana, on the other hand, has not been shown to

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affect the body in almost negative anyway. This makes it an ideal medication for patients, but with its current classification can cause it to be difficult and often not possible for the correct patients to receive their medication. How marijuana is now classified is that it has no accepted medical use, but with the NCI saying that it kills cancer cells should be grounds for it to be moved to a lower less dangerous classification. Marijuana cannot be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) until the DEA moves it to a lower classification. Currently, a medical marijuana patient could be arrested by the federal government because according to the DEA and federal law marijuana is a controlled substance and is illegal. This is the large political conflict currently, on a state level for many states it is legal but the federal government doesn't recognize these laws. This might bring up the question on why is marijuana is illegal, for most of american history it was legal and accepted in the medical community, but then hemp was going to replace wood in the manufacturing of paper so lobbyists of the timber industry's convinced congress to make hemp illegal by starting a smear campaign against it and it worked.

The best way for the government to deal with this problem is by making marijuana available for those who need it, and eventually make it completely legal. This seems like it would be counterintuitive but if it was legal it would be less valuable. This would cause the amount of crime around it to almost disappear completely because the crime would go away it would make it less dangerous for people to get their medication. It would also make our prisons less crowded with people in for minor drug offenses. Today some people have to go to illegal methods to get their medication. Also, it would save the government millions because they wouldn't have to spend money going after dispensaries or grows instead they could use it to go after harder drugs that are killing and addicting people. On the topic of money, the government can tax it to get additional sales tax. States that have legalized marijuana have made large amounts of money from tax revenue that caused them to come out of debt, another perk of marijuana legalization is that it would help grow a booming industry and create millions of jobs. This would boost the American economy because it has boomed in all of the states that have legalized marijuana, it would be similar to the gold rush. It would be less people in jail, according to ACLU in 2010 52% of drug arrests were for marijuana, and most of the time it was small time dealers or regular users not the kingpins that run the cartels and gangs. We could use the money to go after the harder drugs and violent criminals. There are almost no consequences for making marijuana legal.

These are the grounds that this harmless plant should be made legal for use by those who choose to. Most of what people have been taught and what they think that they know is wrong and was created to strike fear into the hearts of the american people so that they could manipulate them into accepting racism. It is a completely safe alternative medication that will do way more good than harm to those who use it.