Legalization Of Marijuana For Therapeutic Purposes

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Introduction

“Imagine This” – your child has 60 seizures a day and cannot participate in normal activities because of it. You have tried everything, but nothing has changed. Then you discover medical marijuana, and luckily, because you live in a state that has legalized it, your child is cured. Marijuana is considered an explicit drug that is considered dangerous for human consumption. However, the research has also proved its efficiency and effectiveness for medicinal purposes. The political and social lobbying for the legalization of marijuana is underway. Unfortunately, not all states have allowed medical marijuana, and this has caused many issues for patients and doctors. Considering the implications of marijuana for enhanced healthcare and medicinal purposes, along with counterarguments, the media has become one of the most powerful mediums to advocate the medicinal use of marijuana. For instance, in the documentary “The Culture High,” – the issue of marijuana is so prevalent that documentaries have been made, including this. Based on the promising outcomes already seen in opioid addicts, veterans, and children, a medical strain of marijuana must be legalized as a therapeutic option for patients nationwide. However, more research is necessary to confirm these beneficial effects, and this can only happen after marijuana is reclassified and, therefore, legalized as a Schedule II drug.

Literature Review

Marijuana, also known as cannabis, is an herb that is used as a natural psychoactive drug. Even though cannabis is also used in the medicine for the production of a certain medicine, it is commonly known all over the world for the illegal production of psychoactive drugs that have a grave impact on the physical, mental and psychological health of the individual in the long and short term. It is an intoxicating herb that is the cheapest to produce and extremely profitable to sell illegally.

Although popularly known for its illegal and intoxicating usage, Marijuana is also a helpful and essential herb in treating fatal diseases like AIDS etc. Cannabis utilized in medicine has some well-reported valuable impacts that may include the improvement of nauseated situations, stimulation of craving in chemotherapy and HIV+ patients, decreased intraocular eye force, and also general pain-relieving impacts.

Furthermore, medicinal marijuana is being used to treat “epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, muscle spasms, arthritis, obesity, cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, post-traumatic stress, inflammatory bowel disease, and anxiety” (Mandelbaum 12). Cannabinoids, the psychoactive

component of marijuana and effectively the main component of medical marijuana, have been proven to have an array of effects on the central nervous system. This piece shows that, recently, cannabinoids have been found to “manage the three core PTSD symptom clusters: reexperiencing, avoidance and numbing, and hyperarousal” (Betthauser 1279). According to this article, numerous studies have proven that cannabinoids have helped veterans control their symptoms associated with PTSD; such benefits include “reduced anxiety and insomnia and improved coping ability” (Betthauser 1279).

Moreover, Bruenig (2015) observes a few families and their stories regarding pediatric diseases and the way hemp oil has helped their children find a better life. One such example is Harper, whose mom claims that”‘the week before we tried it, we had 64 seizures…[and] her second week on the hemp oil, we logged none'” (Bruenig 24). Another patient, however, a girl diagnosed with leukemia, only got sicker. They found that her oil contained three times the amount of THC it should have, and this is because “cannabis labs like the ones that HempMedsPx and others use are not [regulated by the FDA] because cannabis is not federally recognized as a legal drug” (Bruenig 22).

On the other hand, it is worth emphasizing that it is not a question of insinuating that it is a simple resource or denying that it will be a multifaceted procedure that must be organized in symphony with a comprehensive examination, underlining the Education Department of the population linked to the dissemination of target and authentic information (Ghosh et al. 21-27).

Furthermore, data shows that “prescription opioid overdoses killed more than 165,000 Americans between 1999 and 2014, and the health and social costs of abusing such drugs are estimated to be as much as $55 billion a year” (Hsu 10). With medical cannabis as an option, however, this article claims that certain opioids might be replaced very soon. Research has shown that “medical cannabis is safer than opioids when it comes to the risk of fatal overdose” (Hsu 12).

While the pro-legalizers make a claim by ethos and pathos, there have been anti-legalizer claims as well, that is often by logos. This is probably one of the main reasons that the legalization of marijuana, even for medicinal purposes, is still not justified.

For instance, William J. Bennett is an anti-legalizer and opponent of the idea that marijuana should be legalized. He strongly condemns the ideas and the pro-legalizers. Critically evaluating his philosophy through his article “Should Drugs be Legalized?” It can be argued that the main motive for being an anti-legalizer is the perception that this will increase the common usage of illicit drugs that may impact the health as well as the socio-cultural values of society. It was his firm belief in his ideology that he rigidly attacked the pro-legalizers by calling their explanations “flawed, fatalistic, hopeless and bankrupt the legislature” (Bennett, 1990).

He bluntly negates the explanation of the proponents that the legalization of marijuana will not only yield them financial profits but will also reduce the overall social crime rate. With such an explanation by pro-legalizers, the flaw in their claims can be observed. This claim is too vague, generic, and flawed as there is no quantitative evidence that the legalization of marijuana will earn them profit

with reduced social crimes.

On the other hand, the claims and arguments being made by Bennett are based on a moral as well as evidential basis. Bennett, in the latter half of his study, gathered some credible and reliable statistical evidence to prove that the legalization of marijuana will be nothing but social immorality with nothing good to be expected out of it. Based on his statistical evidence and flawed claims being made by the pro-legalizers, Bennett states that “I find no merit in the legalizers’ case. The simple fact is that drug use is wrong” (Bennett, 1990).

Therefore, it can be observed that the main motives behind Bennett’s negative of the legalization of marijuana drugs are that he is capable of providing statistical evidence in favor of his argument, while the pro-legalizers tend to focus more on opinion-based generalized explanations that may be flawed and not as persuasive as anti-legalization arguments.

However, there are neutral views as well. For instance, following an experiment on patients with HIV-related neuropathic pain, “results consistently indicated that cannabis significantly reduced pain intensity, with patients reporting 34%-40% decrease on cannabis compared to 17%-20% on placebo” (Grant 18). The article goes on to mention that smoking marijuana is not the only ingestion option available for medical purposes, the other being an oral oil. By the end of the piece, the author suggests a list of guidelines physicians should consider before prescribing medical marijuana should it become legal. For that to happen, however, the classification of marijuana must be re-evaluated. As of now, “the classification of marijuana as a Schedule I drug as well as the continuing controversy as to whether or not cannabis is of medical value are obstacles to medical progress in this area” (Grant 24). Legalization must occur before medical assistance can be issued.

Moreover, there have been practically successful cases as well. Alaska is a forerunner in the medical marijuana conversation. In 1998, Alaskans legalized medical marijuana for patients with debilitating medical conditions. Since then, other states have followed. (Macdonald 358). They also took steps toward legalizing recreational marijuana and are now requesting the reclassification of marijuana under the Controlled Substances Act.

Macdonald, in his article, makes a more legal argument when it states that “the current classification of marijuana as a Schedule I substance under the CSA is used by the federal government to supersede state policing rights under the Tenth Amendment; it furthermore undermines the right of state legislatures to legalize and regulate marijuana in accordance with the desires of its constituents” (Macdonald 349). Since Alaska has always been leading this debate, the nation should look at them for guidance.

Currently, marijuana and its derivatives have been shown to cure the symptoms associated with glaucoma, nausea, HIV/AIDS, multiple sclerosis, seizures, and Alzheimer’s disease (Vargo 44). There is also ongoing research to determine its effect on certain autoimmune diseases and cancers. Despite these successes, however, the article states that marijuana intoxication has the potential to create both acute and chronic effects for potential patients, ones that are not worth the temporary fixes it

provides (Vargo 41-42). With all of that said, this article calls for further research on marijuana to comprehensively understand its potential: “Conducting marijuana research in a fashion similar to pharmaceuticals would not only serve the medical community but also the legislative faction” (Vargo 41).

However, to prove the medicinal effectiveness of medicinal marijuana, some experiments have also been done. For instance, A major point this literature and studies cover is how medical cannabis laws will not alter recreational cannabis use; for example, “among 8th graders, where use has been decreasing, perceived harmfulness has risen in states that have passed medical cannabis laws” (Weiss 40). Another important point made by the article is that science proves that medical marijuana is helping people worldwide. The piece mentions that “as a result of the current legal status of medical cannabis in many states across the US and nations around the world (e.g., Israel, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada, Mexico), various derivatives of the cannabis plant are routinely being used to treat over 50 conditions or symptoms” (Weiss 43).

Critically evaluating and analyzing the available literature and content, it can be stated that the legalization of marijuana is one of the recommended options. However, to safely legalize marijuana with convincing arguments, more research and analysis are required. Some of the gaps in the available literature include the focus on parallel comparative analysis, possible misuse of marijuana as a therapeutic content, recommendations for controlling the exploitation of marijuana as a medicine, cost analysis, etc. With a critical focus on all these aspects, the legalization of marijuana as a Schedule II substance under strict controls and accessibility options, the process can be made helpful for patients suffering from chronic diseases.

One such media tried highlighting some of these gaps by parallel assessment of the legalization of marijuana as a therapeutic solution and marijuana as a drug. This is discussed in a critically acclaimed documentary titled “The High Culture,” which was released in 2014, produced by Adam Scorgie and directed by Brett Harvey.

“The High Culture”

In media, various contents have been produced that highlight the pro- and counter-arguments for the legalization of marijuana with credible evidence in an attempt to persuade the audiences to take an appropriate side. One such documentary that specifically focuses on the merits of the legalization of marijuana is “The Culture High,” produced by Adam Scorgie. One of the most interesting facts about the producer of the documentary is that Scorgie has always been an anti-legalizer. However, with in-depth research, his stance changed and he decided to make a powerful documentary to persuade the audience too. His previous documentary, titled “The Business Behind Getting High,” released in 2007, was an anti-legalized documentary.

The core content of the “The Culture High” documentary is to collect real-life evidence and research

results to persuade the audiences that marijuana has no adverse impact on the lungs, psychology, etc. Instead, it offers great therapeutic results. Scorgie made a powerful statement with this highly acclaimed and persuasive documentary for the campaign for the legalization of marijuana for therapeutic purposes.

Counter Argument And Rebuttal

It is no secret that adolescent drug utilization is on the ascent; a standout amongst the most prevalent drugs is marijuana as a consequence of its availability and reasonableness (Apospori & Vega, 2013). Furthermore, in the "Adverse Structural and Functional Effects of Marijuana on the Brain: Evidence Reviewed," – despite the benefit for illnesses, the authors found that the intake of marijuana at a young age causes "cognitive impairment and damages the brain" (Mandelbaum 12). For adolescent drug addictions, Marijuana's fixings can be blended with nourishment or tea. Every year in America, several thousand deaths occur from the utilization of unlawful drugs (Apospori & Vega, 2013).

Distinctive drugs affect individuals. Researchers have contemplated and learned about THC and how it influences the brain. At the point when marijuana is smoked, THC goes from the lungs to the bloodstream and conveys the synthetic to the brain and every single other organ in the body (Apospori & Vega, 2013). The compound creates various cell reactions that prompt clients were encounter a "high" when smoking marijuana. Unlawful drug use causes deadly contaminations and sicknesses in the body and brain harm; the cognitive thinking procedure is obliterated from the chemicals utilized as a part of drugs (Apospori & Vega, 2013).

Once addicted to the use of marijuana, the rehabilitation of the addict becomes one of the most challenging tasks for his family and other associated authorities. The unchecked and wide-scale use of marijuana can have a seriously adverse impact on intelligence, psychology, mentality, physical health, respiratory system, cardiac system, reproductive system, and digestive system. Along with these, the extensive use of the respective drug can introduce secondary problems and mental disorders such as schizophrenia, psychosis, deep depression, frustration, personality disorders, anxiety, etc.

Engulfed in any of these issues, the addict is likely to be a problem for the peace and the association of society. He may transform into a criminally minded thief to satisfy his craving for the drug. Marijuana is an expensive drug, and the addict needs to have significant expenses to afford the addiction. Stealing, snatching, and even killing may be done by the marijuana addict.

According to moderate opponents, it is evident that the use of marijuana to achieve medical benefits is one of the integral requirements; however, there is always a probability that its misuse may exceed the benefits. While technology has advanced so much that researchers can find ways to create medical alternatives for marijuana, drug addicts are likely to go for marijuana under any

circumstances. In such a situation, the best option is to keep strict control and ban the distribution and usage of marijuana until and unless medically requested.

Having said this, the use of marijuana in the form of a drug not only becomes a threat to the life of the addict but also becomes a threat to the associated people and society. While in the medical field, the benefits are only limited to the patient who can be treated with the alternatives as well. Therefore, it can be concluded that marijuana is a problematic herb that must be controlled significantly.

Conclusion

Medical marijuana has been proven to help a variety of people with a variety of diseases and must be legalized if we want to continue to prescribe it. Although popularly known for its illegal and intoxicating usage, Marijuana is also a helpful and essential herb in treating fatal diseases like AIDS etc. Cannabis utilized in medicine has some well-reported valuable impacts that may include the improvement of nauseated situations, stimulation of craving in chemotherapy and HIV+ patients, decreased intraocular eye force, and also general pain-relieving impacts.

Right now, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not endorsed smoked cannabis for any condition or illness in the United States. Account the FDA asserts great value discriminative proof for its utilization from U.S. studies is lacking (Meola et al. 690). Sixteen states have legitimized cannabis for therapeutic use (Friese & Grube 2). The United States Supreme Court has administered in United States v. Oakland Cannabis Purchasers and Gonzales v. Raich that it's the central administration that has the right to manage and criminalize cannabis, all the more for restorative purposes. The results of these Supreme Court cases can be evaluated to infer that it is important for the government to get involved in the process of legalization of marijuana for medicinal purposes through a properly designed and controlled framework so that its abuse and exploitation can be avoided.

Therefore, it can be concluded that if marijuana has to be legalized for therapeutic purposes, it is important that the involvement of law enforcement agencies and the Federal Government is significant. This is because the legalization must be done with properly defined controls, regulations, and measures to ensure that the therapeutic marijuana is not being exploited and misused by drug abusers, such as in the case of several opioid medicines. The government needs to ensure that proper steps are taken to bring social reforms and awareness so that the proper benefits can be harnessed from the legalization of Marijuana as a Schedule II substance.

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