

Long-term effects of Marijuana Acceptance

It used to be that marijuana was a bad thing, a societal ill, and those who used it would inevitably 'go to pot.' We were cautioned in school, the government waged its War on Drugs, and many went to jail for simply possessing a joint. So, what happened?

One day, the term 'medical marijuana' entered our lexicon and that 'evil weed' suddenly became an alternative medicine. More recently, the term 'recreational marijuana' has come to the fore as more and more jurisdictions across North America soften their policies toward it to the point of legalization.

With all this going for it, is marijuana really the benign party favourite and cure-all so many claim it to be?

Regardless of your point of view, marijuana, or cannabis, is a drug, or rather, it contains the psychoactive ingredient THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol), the psychotropic element that induces the psychedelic experience. It is good for opening the 'doors of perception' and can be used in a shamanistic way to help one conjoin with the rest of organic life on this planet. The second most popular chemical in cannabis is the pain-killing CBD (cannabinoid). This is mostly what patients seek when they ingest marijuana for its medicinal value.

Because we live in a relatively free society, with individual rights and liberties, of course, marijuana should be legal and it is up to us whether we will ingest it or not. But no drug is without its adverse effects. For marijuana, and especially its long-term use, common side-effects include loss of ambition, dependency, and depression. Think about that. What would a country look like if half the people had no ambition, were dependent, and depressed?

I'm not going to say! The danger may not be in marijuana itself so much as in the general acceptance of its use and associated behaviours. Goodbye Protestant work ethic, hello Bob Marley Socialism! Yes, marijuana is a medicine. Yes, it can be a lot of fun. Yes, we can use it on occasion, even regularly and still have normal lives. And yes, we can live without it. But the question is this: how will it change us, as a country, as a society?

I once asked a woman in line at a medical marijuana dispensary why she needed marijuana. She said it was to alleviate her addiction to cannabis. It will be very interesting to see the long-term effects of marijuana acceptance.

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