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Cannabis is a truly terrible, dangerous nasty drug - Part 2 of Series

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In my [last instalment](#) we began disproving some of the myths that prohibitionists use to justify their stance on the medical use of Cannabis.

In this article, we'll examine the fallacy that Cannabis is an abhorrent drug

Cannabis is a Gateway Drug

Many claim that Cannabis is a gateway drug, meaning that it leads to abuse of 'harder' substances. This is simply [not true](#), the only correlation between Cannabis and harder drugs is that those who smoke Cannabis are more likely to have easy access to harder drugs.

In fact, US researchers have claimed that the illegality of Cannabis has actually worsened abuse of harder substances. Because so much money, time and effort is being wasted on enforcing Cannabis prohibition there are less resources available to police the more dangerous drugs.

Cannabis is Dangerous

Cannabis is one of the most used drugs in the UK. All substances pose a risk if not consumed responsibly, so it's less than surprising that a number of people do experience some side effects. However, when you consider the number of Cannabis smokers in the UK surely there should be a much higher level of Cannabis related illness/hospitalisations? Unless, of course, Cannabis is not as dangerous as the media may have you believe.

Cannabis was successfully used in medicine for thousands of years prior to its prohibition in the 20th century. Scientists are currently unsure of whether or not smoking Cannabis increases your risk of cancer compared to simply smoking tobacco. They believe there may be a slightly increased risk, but only because Cannabis smokers tend to hold the smoke in for longer to get a better 'hit'.

It is believed that over use can lead to psychosis, but then overuse of other substances can also lead to ill effects. Overuse of alcohol, for example, can lead to serious damage to major organs. The old adage of "a little of what you want, in moderation" applies to most things in our life, including fast food.

It's also worth noting that use of Cannabis does not cause any mental conditions, it simply exacerbates something that was already there. So if a user develops psychosis, it's because there was already a trace of psychosis there. Whether or not the condition would have developed if the user hadn't been using Cannabis is something that no-one can ever empirically answer.

Many of the prescription medicines used in place of Cannabis carry far greater risk of damage to the human body than Cannabis does. Many medicines can lead to liver damage, increased risk of heart attack and in some cases an increased risk of cancer.

Cannabis use increases crime

There are three main types of crime that people often associate with Cannabis - violent crime, organised crime and theft. Let's begin with Violent Crime;

Violent Crime

It's believed by many that those who smoke Cannabis are more likely to go out looking for a fight. Whether in a dark alley or visiting a club/pub, people assume that if you are stoned you are more likely to attack them.

This, quite simply, is false. Use of Cannabis results in a relaxed euphoria. Yes you're 'high' but expending energy is the very last thing you want to do, most will be quite happy slumped in front of the television. Very few, if any, will feel inclined to go out, much less go out looking for a fight.

Organised Crime

The Home Office regularly reminds us that by purchasing illegal substances we are funding criminal gangs, terrorists and all sorts of other nasty groups. Sadly, this is true at the moment (though not every dealer has these links, obviously). What the Home Office forget to mention, however, is that the Status Quo exists purely because the drugs are illegal.

If the drugs were legalised (whether across the board, or simply for medicinal use), I could purchase my medicine legally. Some of my money would (presumably) go to

the Government as tax, some to the supplier and some to the NHS. At no point would criminal gangs be involved in supplying the medicine that I need to live my life.

Some would argue that the criminal element will always exist, using counterfeit alcohol and smuggled tobacco as examples. It's true that criminal gangs continue to produce counterfeit alcohol and tobacco, but when there is a legal market for the true product, they command much less control.

Those buying directly from the criminal element must surely be aware of the risks. The product is untested and unverified, has been made to the lowest possible cost and could be dangerous to consume. Whilst there is a legal market for the product, why would you buy from a criminal gang?

It would be the same with Cannabis. Because of the Home Office's prejudicial stance I am left with no protection whatsoever. If I purchase Cannabis from a dealer I've no way of knowing exactly what I am buying. Cannabis resin (Hash) is often mixed with boot polish (or similar) to increase the weight. Cannabis bud/leaves are often sprayed with glass to increase the weight, in both cases this dangerous action happens for one reason, and one alone - to command a greater profit.

If the Home Office were to reverse their stance and create a legal and controlled supply chain, many of these problems would go away.

Theft

Use of illegal substances is often associated with an increased rate of theft. Sadly, the two do correlate, but this does not tell the whole story. The assumption is as follows;

1. User gets hooked to illegal substance A
2. User can't afford to buy any
3. User steals to fund habit
4. Rinse and repeat

The reality, however, is that whether or not a substance is illegal has no bearing on this pattern. Alcoholics are utilising a legal substance, but many still have to steal to feed their habit. The point is that this is endemic of a much larger problem and does not relate solely to illegal substances.

In fact, if the Government were to legalise Cannabis, there's a good chance that the number of Cannabis related thefts would go down. If Cannabis were legally available, it would command a much lower price than it does now and so addicts would be more able to afford it. Those who are addicted to it could receive help from the NHS, including controlled prescriptions of the drug.

Much like we do now with prescription meds in fact.

It's also important to bear in mind that, though some *do* get addicted, Cannabis is **not nearly as addictive** as it is portrayed to be.

Conclusion

I hope that I have adequately outlined the fallacies surrounding Cannabis and that the reader has been left with a better understanding of the propaganda war waged by the media and the Home Office against a very viable form of medication. The reality is that very little information regarding Cannabis that has originated within the UK can actually be trusted. Those interested in the truth about this plant need to look further afield, there have been numerous studies world wide, all of which have been largely ignored by the Home Office because they don't suit the political agenda.

As I hope this series will highlight, the UK Government is knowingly and deliberately denying it's citizens access to a viable, safe and effective medication. In order to police their prohibition they chose to disregard *Article 8* of the UDHR, and force those in need to try to survive with a lower standard of living than could be achieved through use of Cannabis (*Article 13*).

Take Action

Please give your support, [contact your MP](#) and demand to know why the Government believes it right to deny effective medication to those who need it most.

Previous in series: [Pharmaceutical Mistakes of the Past](#)

Next in series: The *Home Office* are protecting our children

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