Health policy for Marijuana

Marijuana is a substance that has been used for recreational and addictive purposes since ancient years and is currently purported to have a therapeutic or medical value and claimed to a medicine, popularly known as medical marijuana. In the United States, marijuana is not an approved medication by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA), though currently legally available in its natural smoked and edible plant form in some states, sold as medical marijuana. According to the FDA, marijuana is classified as a Schedule I drug with high risk of addiction and dangerousness with no legitimate medical purpose. However, contrary to US federal law, marijuana is declared legal without a medical approval process in several states ostensibly for deliberating conditions e.g. various pain conditions, depression, anxiety, nail patella, glaucoma and even HIV. However, medical marijuana is also available and used more commonly for various other purposes, particularly, addictive use, even though studies have shown greater harmful effects then beneficial. Especially with marijuana, there is a high rate of misperception in the users that risks for adverse consequences are low and benefits high. In addition, marijuana has a unique pharmacology and pharmacodynamics because of its more than 400 partially unknown components and marijuana is redistributed and stored in the user's lipophilic tissues and available for release back into the blood stream long after the last use, for persistent effects. While marijuana is legally available in some states and other states are pressured to follow suit, the United States House of Representatives has proposed legislation to legalize marijuana as a beverage, similar to alcohol and the United State Senate had proposed legislation to legaliz marijuana as medication, reclassifying marijuana to a Schedule II drug. Marijuana appears here to stay in the US in some form and entrepreneurs line up to profit billions from its anticipated sales and widespread distribution. This article is a systematic review of literature analyzing the current policies, medical facts, legal status and commercial trends as well as politics regarding marijuana and its manufacture, sales and distribution. What is often lost in discussions regarding marijuana is like alcohol, 80% of marijuana is consumed by 20% of the users. And that the current forms of marijuana, licit and illicit are far more potent and contain higher levels of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) than marijuana available in the past. The article is focused on the natural form of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) derived from the Cannabis sativa plant and not the less sought and the actual medical cannabinoids, both natural and synthetic forms, available for medical use. The aim to provide education, facts and discussions which will lead to safe and healthy public policy for marijuana in whatever form it takes in the future.

Biography

Norman S Miller has received his training in Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Hospital and in Neurology at the University of Minnesota. He is a Board-Certified Psychiatrist, Neurologist, Addiction Psychiatrist, Forensic Psychiatrist and Licensed Attorney. He has practiced General Psychiatry and Addiction Psychiatry at Michigan State University, University of Illinois at Chicago and New York Hospital-Cornell University Medical College. He is the Author and Editor of 250 journal articles and book chapters and 13 books.