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## Legalization of Marijuana

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### Abstract

Today's population of young people (ages 10-24), the largest cohort in history, has enormous commercial and societal potential. However, alcohol and illicit substance abuse are adding to a significant number of fatalities and impairments among young people in industrialised countries. To address this, governments must devise a broad-based, inclusive development strategy to address the fundamental systemic causes of poor health behaviour as well as the range of community-level risk factors. The legal production costs of cannabis are likely to bring down wholesale prices, which, combined with the reduced perceived risk in the legalized sales environment, are likely to significantly increase usage and thus the risk of marijuana use by juveniles. This greater consumption is likely to raise emergency room trips, traffic fatalities, and pollution. To target the basic systemic reasons of bad health behaviour, substance use disorder prevention requires a completely distinct and evidence-based strategy. Partial least squares on OECD cross-sectional data revealed the relevance of drug access, income and wealth inequality, child poverty, and teenage work situations in explaining the prevalence of drug disorders in the OECD building.<sup>15</sup>

**Key-words** : full potential, young people, marijuana usage, Vine, Sawyer, Furlong, Food and Drug Administration Lancet, marijuana Cannabis, youth, drug, health, economic, usage, social,

### INTRODUCTION

It is vital for a country to help its young people attain their full potential and make a successful transition to adulthood. The way a country's socioeconomic factors impact adolescent health is essential to the country's overall health and future economic prosperity. Vine and colleagues (2012). The present generation of persons aged 10 to 24 is the largest in history, accounting for one-quarter of the world's population. Sawyer and colleagues (2012). Living in current societies has become quite difficult for young people. Youth transitions have gotten more lengthy and convoluted over the previous few decades, with uncertainty regarding future employment advancement. The paths between school and work have gotten increasingly clogged. They are dependable, and they include frequent vacations with the possibility of intermittent unemployment. (Furlong, Cartmel, Biggart, Sweeting, & West, 2003). The marketing of unhealthy goods and behaviours (e.g., cigarettes, liquor, fat, sugar, and salt) to vulnerable kids is one of the rising causes of teens' health hazards. Sawyer and colleagues (2012). Unabated global illicit drug trafficking, evolving societal standards, and the dominance of social media are all diverting high-risk behaviour among school and college students. Young people aged 11 to 15 encounter a range of stressors and challenges, including increased academic requirements, evolving social connections with family and friends, and the physical and emotional changes that accompany development. Currie and colleagues (2012) Adolescents and youths worldwide are dealing with multiple stressors as a result of an increasing trend of family violence

<sup>15</sup> Risk and protective factors of drug abuse among adolescents: a systematic review <https://scite.ai/reports/10.1186/s12889-021-11906-2>



and family breakups, peer bullying pressures, economic hardship, and inadequate housing conditions—all of which make them vulnerable to anxiety, depression, and psychosomatic symptoms (Furlong et al., 2003). While the frequency of mental and substance use issues was dispersed across all age groups, Whiteford et al. (2013) revealed that teens and young-to-middle-aged adults had the highest percentage of disability-adjusted life years (DALYs). (10-29 years old). Numerous research studies have discovered a substantial correlation between mental illness and the likelihood of drug usage. Degenhardt and Hall (2012); Conway, Swendsen, Husky, He, and Merikangas, 2016). In their cross-national study report, Merikangas et al. (1998) revealed a substantial relationship between mood and anxiety disorders, as well as antisocial personality disorder and drug use disorders. The mid-to-late adolescent years are the most risky for the initiation of drug usage. (Lopez, 2015, p. Juvenile drug and alcohol usage can result in decreased decision-making capacity and increased long-term repercussions due to the immature state of the teenage brain. (2013) (Whitesell, Bachand, Peel, & Brown). Adolescents who are addicted to psychotropic medications or alcohol are more likely to participate in criminal activity, survival sex, and other things they would not normally engage in if they were not hooked. According to some estimates, neuropsychiatric disorders, including drug misuse, account for over half of all non-fatal DALYs in individuals aged 10 to 24. (Sawyer et al., 2012). Previous research has found a clear association between adolescent substance consumption and problem drug use later in life. Belcher and Shinitzky (1998); Currie et al., 2012; DuRant, Smith, Kreiter, and Krowchuk (1999). Drug use can contribute to marginalisation by increasing the likelihood of poor health, disengagement from the school system, absence from work, and unemployment (Alvazzi del Frate, 2016). Evidence from modern science (neuroscience and psychology) and social epidemiology findings are important for

policymaking. Despite rising evidence of the detrimental social repercussions of cannabis use (in terms of increased sickness, death, traffic accidents, and crime rate), there is an ongoing, growing push in various nations to legalise recreational marijuana usage at the national or state level. Marijuana usage became legal at the national level in Canada in 2018, making it the second country to do so after Uruguay. This current frenzy of plans and actions creates a number of difficulties that necessitate a detailed critical assessment of the youth's future well-being, the stability and feasibility of future economic development, and the ensuing environmental impact. Substance use is not an isolated occurrence; it is impacted by a country's contextual elements, which include, to mention a few, drug-friendly laws and practises, socioeconomic inequities (poor, uneven access to resources), and neighbourhood disorganisation (crime rates, juvenile criminality). Some governments' non-inclusive economic and social development initiatives have resulted in unequal prospects for growth, relative poverty, and differential access to the resources required for skill acquisition, productive work, and humane living circumstances in recent years. Many complex developments are taking place at a time when youth in most developed countries are expected to shoulder the growing burden of old-age dependency—a major challenge to the economic sustainability of developed economies in the twenty-first century if youth economic and health conditions remain debilitated. Many complex developments are taking place at a time when youth in most developed countries are expected to shoulder the growing burden of old-age dependency—a major challenge to the economic sustainability of developed economies in the twenty-first century if youth economic and health conditions remain debilitated.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Benefits and harms of medical cannabis: a scoping review of systematic reviews <https://scite.ai/reports/10.1186/s13643-019-1243-x>



## **Legalization of Marijuana by Canada: Treading in Dangerous Waters**

The legalisation of cannabis for therapeutic purposes in industrialised nations has led to the prevalent assumption that marijuana is a harmless recreational substance that governments should not regulate or consider illegal. Volkow and colleagues (2014). In many countries, young people see recreational marijuana usage as harmless. Supporters of legalisation claim that it would give better and more consistent product quality without the threat of jail, as well as a new avenue for all levels of government to raise more revenue from legal sales and reallocate resources to priority needs. Uncensored social media and scant research findings that contradict neuroscience-based facts have led to the misconception of marijuana's benign impact. Many unsolved questions remain in medical studies concerning marijuana's long-term impact on health care and public safety, including the effects of misuse and dependency. (Davis et al., 2016; Belendiuk, Baldani, and Bonn-Miller, 2015). In the United States, the Food and Drug Administration has not approved marijuana for medicinal use. 2017 (Lancet). The absence of reliable evidence demonstrating cannabis's usefulness as a medication is highlighted in documents issued by the colleges of physicians and surgeons in both British Columbia and Alberta. (2018) (Canadian Family Physician). On the demand side, additional information on cannabis dose and amounts used by both occasional and frequent users is required. Leggett (2006). The evidence supporting the medical use of marijuana or cannabinoids is limited to a few symptoms, most notably HIV/AIDS cachexia, chemotherapy nausea/vomiting, neuropathic pain, and spasticity in multiple sclerosis (S. T. Wilkinson, Yarnell, Radhakrishnan, Ball, & D'Souza, 2016).

Additionally, cannabis is not a constant drug: the effect of consuming cannabis with variable potencies and chemical compositions need

further research. Leggett (2006). Leggett (2006) cautioned that additional scientific data on cannabis growth is required to arrive at accurate global forecasts of the level of output. The evidence for marijuana or cannabinoids' therapeutic utility is limited to a few symptoms, such as HIV/AIDS cachexia, chemotherapy nausea/vomiting, neuropathic pain, and spasticity in multiple sclerosis (S. T. Wilkinson, Yarnell, Radhakrishnan, Ball, & D'Souza, 2016). Leggett (2006) cautioned that additional scientific data on cannabis growth is required to arrive at accurate global forecasts of the level of output. The majority of family doctors are sceptical about marijuana's health advantages and believe its usage is hazardous. Kondrad and Reid (2013). Notwithstanding the ambiguity surrounding the impact of legalising cannabis on public health, several nations are modifying their laws to enable adults to consume it. Because the impact of adult recreational marijuana legalisation on teenage mental health usage is unknown at this time, outright marijuana legalisation "cannot be advised" (Ammerman & Ryan 2015). It is a big experiment for Canada at a time when scientific evidence about its safety and efficacy is scarce. Ammerman and Ryan (2015) Canada has the highest adolescent use rates in the globe, with 28% of 11-15-year-olds admitting past-year use in 2009-2010. (Spithoff & Kahan, 2014; UNICEF, 2013). More current data for Canadians aged 15-19, 20-24, and 25 years and higher show that 21%, 30%, and 10% used tobacco in the previous year, respectively. (Statistics Canada, 2017). Nonmedical cannabis use among youth in Canada is 2.5 times greater than among people aged 25 and older. (Statistics Canada, 2017). . Canada is the world's second country, after Uruguay, and the first G7 country to adopt legislation allowing for a national marijuana market. In the neighbouring United States, nine states and the District of Columbia have legalised commercial marijuana usage, while 30 have legalised medical marijuana use.

## **Legalization Will Substitute the Illegal Market and Increase Tax Revenue**



One highly publicised and appreciated financial benefit of cannabis legalisation is that it will substitute the current black market and generate revenue through taxing on retail cannabis sales from legal retailers. Price (including tax) is an essential component in determining sales (and tax revenue) as well as restricting black market activities, according to this income argument. Subritzky, Pettigrew, and Lenton (2015). Unfortunately, identifying the price level that is compatible with the legalisation aims is challenging in practise. The dilemma is as follows: if governments keep prices high to limit demand, underground market activity is likely to proliferate, yet low prices may result in greater consumption rates among the most disadvantaged (i.e., youth and substance users). (2015) (Kleiman). A significant amount of empirical data suggests that drug consumption is price sensitive.

Marijuana decriminalisation, according to Saffer and Chaloupka (1999), would increase the chance of marijuana usage by 4% to 6%. According to Pacula et al. (2001), the price elasticity estimates of marijuana use by high-school seniors demonstrate that the quality-adjusted price of marijuana adds significantly to the trends in teenage marijuana usage between 1982 and 1998. According to these authors, changes in juvenile perceptions of the hazards associated with regular marijuana use had a substantial impact on the adolescents' use behaviour.

According to the findings of Pacula et al., a 10% decrease in the perceived danger of marijuana would result in a 28.7% increase in the annual prevalence of marijuana use among teenagers. Very low prices threaten a considerable growth in the usage of minors and heavy users (Kleiman, 2015). In a profit-driven, recreational, legalised market, there is a potential of conflict and friction between public health imperatives and a quickly increasing cannabis sector, which, like other companies, will attempt to exploit loopholes to maximise profit. Subritzky and colleagues (2015). According to UNODC

(2004), legalizing does not eliminate drug trafficking since criminals may exploit systemic flaws. Furthermore, dealing with the black market is a difficult task because dealers dedicated to the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, and sale of drugs can translate their skills and experience (eluding cops, maintaining customer loyalty, and using the Internet and social media) to infiltrating legal markets and capturing revenue through illegal sales using the Internet and social media. Today's drug production and delivery system is profoundly embedded, highly sophisticated, strongly globalized, and largely controlled by a network of national and international activists. In today's cyber-culture, the Internet serves as a perfect venue for promoting and marketing these compounds. (Miliano, Margiani, Fattore, & de Luca, 2018). Traffickers are resourceful, and they can quickly adapt to market shifts, including contending with legitimate drugs. (DuPont, 2016). Globalization and the spread of information technology are abetting the illegal supply. Furthermore, it is instructive to compare and consider two market segments of nonmedical marijuana use: relatively well-off club drug users in nightlife settings, and other street drug users who are economically poor, homeless, unemployed, or adolescents disengaged from school. Because taxation is a blunt tool, these monetarily and socially marginalised individuals are likely to be targeted by illegal sellers, pushing them back into the illicit market. (Subritzky et al., 2015). By providing risky and cheaper goods, illegal operators may draw the fiscally disadvantaged and addicts. One recent study, citing evidence from Colorado State, stated that the desire for profits and income has prompted legal merchants to use inappropriate marketing ads that contribute to increased drug abuse (SAM, 2018) According to DuPont (2016), the illicit marijuana market flourishes in rivalry with the UNODC's two extreme typologies of drug use among young people. (2018). The potential of marijuana legalisation resulting in advertising efforts for its use, some of which could be aimed



towards adolescents, has been mentioned. The ambiguity regarding advertising loopholes to youth and drug addicts may continue to vex public officials. What does appear obvious is that legalisation is unlikely to eliminate the illicit market. There is significant ambiguity surrounding these possible income claims, owing to confusion about what would happen to the underground market and its capacity to keep the street price at its present level. (Shanahan & Ritter, 2014). The case for tax breaks is thus based on the extremely flimsy premise that illicit markets will vanish with the touch of a pen. As previously stated, this is an extremely unlikely situation. On the contrary, criminal organisations are very likely to join the licit market while staying in the illicit market. (INCB, 2013). The probable rise in the social expense of public health and safety measures is a significant negative side effect of legalisation. According to DuPont (2016), former head of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the majority of the costs of drug use are the outcome of drug use rather than attempts to reduce drug use. Governments must weigh the projected revenue from the sale against the additional total cost for public health and safety requirements, such as (a) road crash fatalities and injuries, (b) emergency-related hospital visits, (c) poison centre calls, (d) environmental damage, (e) an increase in family problems, (f) resulting low performance, workplace accidents, and absenteeism, and (g) increases in crime rates (Maxwell & Mendelson, 2016; UNODC, 2004). Patton et al. (2007) discovered that both alcohol and cannabis use pose health hazards, and that both frequently begin in youth.<sup>17</sup>

### **Legalization Saves Crime Prevention Costs and Illegal Trafficking**

This assertion is not supported by data from states in the United States that have legalised the recreational use of marijuana. Legalization creates an environment in which marijuana use

is more socially acceptable, it is marketed and available in various forms (e.g., drinks, edibles, vaporised), and it may contain significantly more THC than marijuana users have previously consumed (Cerdá et al., 2012; W. Hall & Weier, 2015; Hopfer, 2014; Lynne Landsman, Livingston, & Wagenaar, 2013). Cannabis edibles have created new legal obstacles. Among the main social and environmental variables that increase the probability of use at an early age (i.e., early puberty) are drug access and social standards for the tolerance of alcohol and other drug use. (Degenhardt & Hall, 2012). Lower prices (Hawkins et al., 1992; Hopfer, 2014) and a lower perception of risk are associated with a higher risk of youth involvement in drug use and harm (Birhanu, Bisetegn, & Woldeyohannes, 2014; Cerdá et al., 2012; Hasin et al., 2015; Joffe & Yancy, 2004). The legal availability of drugs fosters an atmosphere conducive to the start of drug use or the development of novel kinds of drug-using behaviour. (Alvazzi del Frate, 2016). School polls conducted in the United States from 1975 to 2015, as well as in Chile from 2011 to 2013, confirm these trends of use among school pupils. (Alvazzi del Frate, 2016). Evidence suggests that shifting marijuana policies and views in some American states have increased the probability of negative marijuana outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial that we consider the potential consequences of legalizing marijuana. Legalizing marijuana may have detrimental effects on individuals and society as a whole. It is important to recognize that legalization may lead to increased youth use, impaired driving incidents, decreased workplace productivity, healthcare costs associated with increased marijuana-related illnesses and potential long-term negative impacts on mental health. For these reasons, we should carefully evaluate the potential consequences and thoroughly consider all factors before moving forward with legalizing marijuana. In fact, we should prioritize education and prevention efforts, support further research on the potential benefits and harms of marijuana use, and explore alternative

<sup>17</sup> Epidemiology of drug driving: protocol from a national Canadian study measuring levels of cannabis, alcohol and other substances in injured drivers  
<https://scite.ai/reports/10.1186/s12889-020-09176-5>



policies that may effectively address the issues associated with marijuana use and its potential legalization. Together, we can work towards establishing evidence-based policies that prioritize public health and safety while also considering individual rights and freedoms. We must not hastily jump to the conclusion that legalizing marijuana is a viable solution. Instead, we should proceed with caution and consider alternative approaches that prioritize education and prevention efforts while also effectively addressing the issues associated with marijuana use.

Let us prioritize public health and safety while also considering individual rights and freedoms. We must carefully evaluate the potential consequences and thoroughly consider all factors before legalizing marijuana. We should proceed with caution and consider alternative approaches that prioritize education and prevention efforts while also effectively addressing the issues associated with marijuana use. Together, we can work towards establishing evidence-based policies that prioritize public health and safety while also considering individual rights and freedoms. In short, let us not make hasty decisions that could potentially have serious negative consequences.

We must prioritize evidence-based policies that weigh the potential benefits and harms of legalizing marijuana. Before moving forward with any decisions regarding the legalization of marijuana, we must prioritize research on its potential benefits and harms. This research will provide the necessary evidence base for developing policies that prioritize public health and safety while also considering individual rights and freedoms. We should also prioritize education and prevention efforts to ensure that individuals are well-informed about the risks associated with marijuana use.

By prioritizing evidence-based policies that weigh the potential benefits and harms of legalizing marijuana, we can ensure that decisions regarding the legalization of

marijuana are grounded in sound judgment and supported by empirical evidence. Let us work together towards creating a future where all individuals have access to accurate and unbiased information regarding marijuana use. With careful consideration and a comprehensive approach, we can effectively address the issues associated with marijuana use while also respecting individual rights and freedoms. In conclusion, it is imperative that we prioritize evidence-based policies and a comprehensive approach to address the issues associated with marijuana use. Together, we can create a safer and healthier society for all. It is time to have an open and honest conversation about the potential benefits and harms of legalizing marijuana.

Let us proceed with caution and prioritize the well-being of our communities over any potential revenue or political gain. Legalizing marijuana should only occur after comprehensive research and analysis of its potential benefits and harms. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to be thorough and thoughtful in our approach towards marijuana legalization. Let us not rush into hasty decisions that could have serious negative consequences.

We must carefully consider the potential risks associated with legalizing marijuana and actively work to mitigate them. Some of the potential risks associated with legalizing marijuana include increased risk of dependence, impaired cognitive function, and a negative impact on mental health. It is crucial that we do not minimize the potential risks of legalizing marijuana, but rather acknowledge and actively work to mitigate them. While it is important to recognize the potential risks associated with legalizing marijuana, we must also acknowledge that criminalizing it has not been effective in reducing use and has disproportionately impacted communities of color. By legalizing marijuana and implementing evidence-based policies, we can reduce the negative impacts of criminalization





while also ensuring that individuals have access to safe and regulated marijuana products. Moreover, legalizing marijuana can provide significant economic benefits through increased tax revenue and job creation. By legalizing marijuana, we can create a regulated and safe market that benefits both consumers and society. It is time for us to embrace a new approach towards marijuana and take appropriate steps towards legalization. Let us push for evidence-based policies that prioritize public health and safety, while also acknowledging the potential economic benefits of legalization. Together, let us advocate for a responsible approach towards marijuana legalization that takes into account the potential risks and benefits. Let us proceed with caution, prioritize evidence-based research and analysis, and engage in thoughtful discussions to ensure that we make an informed decision about the legalization of marijuana. The legalization of marijuana can create a better and safer society for everyone. It is important that we approach this issue with an open mind and acknowledge the potential benefits of legalizing marijuana. While acknowledging the potential risks associated with marijuana use, we must also recognize that legalizing it can lead to reduced criminal activity and create new economic opportunities. Furthermore, legalizing marijuana can also potentially serve as a valuable medical treatment for various conditions such as chronic pain and anxiety. Research has shown that medical marijuana can have a positive impact on mental health by providing relief for individuals suffering from anxiety, depression, and other related conditions. By legalizing marijuana, we can expand access to medical treatment for those who need it and prioritize the well-being of our citizens. Therefore, it is time for policymakers to listen to the voices of advocates and experts who have been calling for the legalization of marijuana. Let us work towards creating a more just and equitable society by legalizing marijuana. Together, we can create a safer and more prosperous future for our communities by

legalizing marijuana. Let's take this opportunity to create a better future and support the legalization of marijuana. Join us in advocating for responsible and evidence-based policies that prioritize public health, safety, and economic prosperity. Let us make our voices heard and urge lawmakers to take action towards legalizing marijuana. Together, let us take action to build a brighter future and create a safer society for everyone. Join the movement towards legalizing marijuana today and help build a brighter future for all. Let's make the right choice and support the responsible legalization of marijuana. By legalizing marijuana, we can ensure that we are using our resources efficiently and effectively while prioritizing the well-being of society as a whole. It is time for our leaders to take bold action and pass legislation that legalizes marijuana. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to create a society that prioritizes individual freedom, social justice, and public health. Join the movement today and let's work towards legalizing marijuana for a brighter future.<sup>18</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The present generation of persons aged 10 to 24 is the largest in history, accounting for one-quarter of the world's population. Living in current societies has become difficult for young people, with uncertainty regarding future employment advancement and frequent vacations with the possibility of intermittent unemployment. Unabated global illicit drug trafficking, evolving societal standards, and the dominance of social media are all diverting high-risk behaviour among school and college students. Research has revealed a correlation between mental illness and the likelihood of drug usage, with the mid-to-late adolescent years being the most risky for the initiation of drug usage. Adolescent drug and alcohol usage can lead to decreased decision-making capacity and increased long-term repercussions due to the immature state of the

<sup>18</sup> Socio-Economic Inequality, Human Trafficking, and the Global Slave Trade <https://scite.ai/reports/10.3390/soc4020148>



teenage brain. Previous research has found a clear association between adolescent substance consumption and problem drug use later in life. Marijuana usage became legal at the national level in Canada in 2018, creating a number of difficulties that necessitate a detailed critical assessment of the youth's future well-being, the stability and feasibility of future economic development, and the ensuing environmental impact. Substance use is impacted by a country's contextual elements, such as drug-friendly laws and practises, socioeconomic inequities, and neighbourhood disorganisation. The legalisation of marijuana for therapeutic purposes in industrialised nations has led to the assumption that it is a harmless recreational substance. However, uncensored social media and scant research findings contradict neuroscience-based facts have led to the misconception of its benign impact. In the US, the Food and Drug Administration has not approved marijuana for medicinal use. The evidence for marijuana's usefulness as a medication is limited to a few symptoms, such as HIV/AIDS cachexia, chemotherapy nausea/vomiting, neuropathic pain, and spasticity in multiple sclerosis. Additional scientific data on cannabis growth is needed to accurately forecast the level of output. The majority of family doctors are sceptical about marijuana's health advantages.

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