Marijuana as Medicine – Experience in States

- A major study published in Drug and Alcohol Dependence by researchers at Columbia University looked at two separate data sets and found that residents of states with medical marijuana had marijuana abuse/dependence rates almost twice as high as states without such laws.\textsuperscript{i}

- An additional study in the September 2011 issue of Annals of Epidemiology found that, among youths age 12-17, marijuana use rates were higher in states with medical marijuana laws (8.6%) compared with those without such laws (6.9%).\textsuperscript{ii}

- A study published in the Harm Reduction Journal (not exactly an anti-drug mouthpiece), analyzing more than 3,000 “medical marijuana users in California, found that an overwhelming majority (87.9%) of those queried about the details of their marijuana initiation had tried it before the age of 19, and the average user was a 32-year-old, white male. 74% of the Caucasians in the sample had used cocaine, and more than 50% had used methamphetamine in their lifetime.\textsuperscript{iii}

- The average user in California was a 32-year old white male with a history of alcohol and substance abuse and no history of life-threatening illness.

- In Colorado, according to the Department of Health, only 2% of users reported cancer, and less than 1% reported HIV/AIDS as their reason for marijuana. The vast majority (94%) reported “severe pain.”\textsuperscript{iv}

- In Oregon, there are reports that only 10 physicians made the majority all recommendations for “medical” marijuana, and agitation, seizures, cancer,
HIV/AIDS, cachexia, and glaucoma were the last six reasons people utilized marijuana for “medical” purposes.v

- Since certain states began permitting dispensing of medical marijuana, adolescents’ perceptions of the harmful effects of marijuana have decreased and marijuana use has increased significantly.vi

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