



## Allowing people who suffer from chronic pain to use marijuana helps reduce opiate use.



- A recent study found **48% reduction in patients' opioid use after three months** of medical marijuana treatment.
- A survey of 542 patients using cannabis in addition to opioids found that 39% reduced their opioid dosage and another 39% stopped using opioids altogether.
- Health Affairs reported that doctors in a state where marijuana was legal prescribed an average of **1,826 fewer doses of painkillers per year** to patients enrolled in Medicare Part D — which resulted in significant cost savings.
- Scientists have found that when cannabis is used in combination with prescription opioids, it increases their pain-relieving properties, so patients can reduce their dosage and get the same effect.
- Researchers at Columbia University's School of Public Health found that, in states that passed medical marijuana laws, fewer drivers killed in car crashes tested positive for opioids after the laws went into effect.

### **Medical marijuana access is also associated with reduced opioid overdose deaths.**

- A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2014 found that opioid overdose deaths were reduced by 25% in states with effective medical marijuana laws.

### **No credible studies have ever supported the theory that the physical effects of marijuana are a gateway to opiate use.**

- “There is no evidence that marijuana serves as a stepping stone on the basis of its particular physiological effect.” - Institute of Medicine



## Allowing people who suffer from chronic pain to use marijuana helps reduce opiate use.

- “Overall, research does not support a direct causal relationship between regular marijuana use and other illicit drug use.” - Drug Enforcement Administration

**In fact, available evidence suggests that cannabis is an “exit drug” that can help people struggling to stop using alcohol and opioids.**

- An international team recently conducted one of the most comprehensive surveys of its kind, which examined 60 studies on cannabis and mental health, and found that: “Research suggests that people may be using cannabis as an exit drug to reduce use of substances that are potentially more harmful, such as opioid pain medication.” - Zach Walsh, Psychology Professor at the University of British Columbia and lead author of the study

1 Staci A. Gruber, et al. “Splendor in the Grass? A Pilot Study Assessing the Impact of Medical Marijuana on Executive Function,” *Front. Pharmacol.*, 13 Oct. 2016, Vol. 7.

2 The Cannabis and Opioid Survey.” *Healer.com*, 4 Oct. 2016.

3 Ashley C. Bradford et al. “Medical Marijuana Laws Reduce Prescription Medication Use In Medicare Part D,” *Health Aff.* July 2016, Vol. 35 no. 7.

4 Abrams, Donald et al. “Cannabinoid-Opioid interaction in chronic pain,” *Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics*, vol.90, no. 6 (2011).

5 June H. Kim, et al., “State Medical Marijuana Laws and the Prevalence of Opioids Detected Among Fatally Injured Drivers,” *Am. J. of Pub. Health*, Nov. 2016, Vol. 106 no.11.

6 Marcus A. Bachhuber, et al., “Medical Cannabis Laws and Opioid Analgesic Overdose Mortality in the United States, 1999-2010,” *JAMA Intern Med.* Oct. 2014, Vol. 174 no. 10.

7 *Marijuana and Medicine: Assessing the Science*, Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences (1999).

8 Denial of Petition to Initiate Proceedings to Reschedule Marijuana, Federal Register, Doc. # 2016-17954, 8/12/16.

9 University of British Columbia, “Marijuana could help treat drug addiction, mental health, study suggests,” *ScienceDaily*, Nov. 16