**I-Search Project - Marijuana**

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**Drugs: What I Know**

A ‘drug’ can be a substance that is used as a medicine or it can mean the illegal substance that some people ingest for physical and mental effects.[[1]](#footnote-1) Illegal drugs affect people in a harmful way, then again, drugs are not always injurious because doctors can use drugs to reduce patient’s pain and help them. Drugs could be beneficial or detrimental and it is depends on how people use it.

There are lots of different kinds of drugs: heroin, cocaine, opium, and so on. Druggies, a nickname for those who take them regularly, are usually unhealthy and skinny because the drugs make them go insane and they are unable to live in normal society.

Opium is made from poppies, a red flower with black seeds. Businessmen mostly grow them in Asia and charge a high price for them. One of the most famous places for drug trading is in Southeast Asia called Golden Triangle. It’s located between Thailand, Burma, and Laos.

Normally, people do not inject or smoke drugs, however, some people do. There are many different kinds of reasons for their behavior. Sometimes, it is because of the pressure of work or family. When people cannot handle the stress, they take drugs in order to make themselves unconscious so they can forget about those unhappy things for a while.

As people inject drugs, they generally become addicted to drugs. It is very hard to give them up, since coming off the drugs is a long and painful process. In most countries, the government helps addicts to abstain from drugs, and they build detox clinics for substance abusers.

In my opinion, I think not only drugs should be forbidden and illegal outside the hospital but also cigarettes and alcohol. They are all unhealthy and people use them just because they do not want to face the truth. They cause people to act like cowards.

**Drugs: What I Want to Find Out**

As a teenager, I know that drugs are a serious problem. Not only among us but also for adults. So, I chose ‘drugs’ as my topic in order to try to know more about them and how they affect people. I will focus my topic on marijuana.

I am curious and interested in this topic is because I am the kind of person who loves to make an effort and tries to do everything. My parents and other adults always tell me that I can try anything, anything except drugs. So, I want to discover more about it, like who invented drugs, and for what purpose? Who are the people who use marijuana? Where does it come from? How is it made? Was it illegal in the past? Do people want it to be legal now?

What I want to know badly is, what are the ingredients and how do they make it? Also, I want to research about trafficking drugs. Which country has the most drugs, undeveloped, developing, or developed? Also, what is the percentage of people who take drugs in different countries?

While I was writing these questions, I thought of the people who inject drugs. I wonder what is their age range? What do they do? Do they have any family member that live with them? I am also interested in their financial circumstances. There is a stereotype that mostly bad people, like hooligans or gangsters, do drugs. But the truth is that lots of celebrities and rich people take drugs, too. Therefore, I want to research more about it.

Another thing I’d like to learn about is the side effects of drugs. Those extra and bad effects that drugs have on addicts seem to be very strong so people cannot give them up easily. So, I would like to know, are there any ways that can reduce the side effects and drug users’ pain?

Lastly, in my research, I would like to find some true stories of drug addicts. To see what were their reasons for doing drugs. Also, to see if there are any organizations, doctors, or kind people those are helping them.

**Drugs - Marijuana: Internet**

“National Institute of Health,” is the website that I chose for my research. I think it is reputable because it is a national website ending in ‘.gov’, which means government. The page title is called Information Facts: Marijuana and it was revised on November 2010. The article did not mention the author’s name because it is belong to the organization.

Marijuana is a kind of illicit drug that is most commonly abused drug in United States. It is a dry, shredded green and brown mixture of the hemp plant *Cannabis sativa*’s flowers, stems, and seeds. The main active chemical in marijuana is delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC for short.

Unlike other drugs, marijuana is not injected into our body but it usually is smoked like a cigarette. This produces poisonous fumes that affect both the drug taker and other people’s health. When somebody inhales, the THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) passes very fast from the lungs into the blood stream. The blood then carries the chemical to the brain and other organs in the body. When marijuana affects one’s brain, it affects one’s thinking, problem solving, memorizing, and learning and when marijuana affects one’s organs. Those organs would gradually decrease their function and eventually shut down.

If you smoke too much, not only would your lungs would get sick or develop cancer, but your teeth would also be affected. According to the article, marijuana addicts normally have higher rates of depression or schizophrenia. Although marijuana is very harmful to people’s health, it is not illegal yet in some countries, for example, Canada, so people can buy it in store when they were adults.

After reading this article, I think everyone should insist on not smoking, especially in public areas. Marijuana affects our lungs, heart, brain, and people around us. Pregnant women should be especially careful because it may cause mutation to their babies. Lastly, I think smoking should be illegal in every country, like other drugs!

**Marijuana: Encyclopedia**

Marijuana is also known as marihuana or cannabis. It is a Mexican-Spanish word, which originally means a poor grade of tobacco.

Similar to things that are expensive, enjoyable, but not necessary, Marijuana is growing in different parts of the world and has different potency levels depending on the environment and the cultivation. Every year, the black market smuggles about 15,000 tons of marijuana into the United States. This mostly comes from countries in middle and southern America, such as, Mexico, Columbia, and Jamaica. (Wagman, 216)

Although it is known that THC (tetrahydrocannabional) from the resin of stem is the active principal, but scientists have not ascertained the specific substances in marijuana that cause the drug effects. One of the effects of taking marijuana is similar to hallucinogens. It is an experience that makes people see, feel, and hear things that are not really there due to the drug effects. Even though, it is not as potent as the real hallucinogens, it still causes enduring brain damage. (Wagman, 951)

According to the tentative research by doctors and scientists, marijuana might cause mutation or genetic damage, but it can also reduce the pain of patients. In 1976, the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) approved the use of marijuana for medical treatment. (Wagman, 952)

Marijuana and tobacco are very similar; people usually smoke them as cigarette. Drug users usually loss their appetite and feel dehydrated. Besides that, marijuana also accumulates in liver and increases in heartbeat, but decrease is body temperature and cause changing in blood sugar. (Wagman, 953)

I was kind of shocked after I read these pages from the encyclopedia because of the facts that it gave. For example, 1,500 tons per year are imported to America alone! That is unbelievable! To be honest, I really want to know what taking a hallucinogen or marijuana might feel like, but I had better not try those things. I am worried that it would be too difficult to quit and I might become addicted.

**Drug - Marijuana: News/Magazine**

The article I chose is from BBC. The title of this article is called “HEALTH: Cannabis. It is written by Dr. Trisha Macnair and was last reviewed in March 2010. I think it is reliable information because BBC, British Broadcasting Corporation, is one of the biggest broadcasters in the United Kingdom.

Marijuana, also known as cannabis, is made from hemp. Hemp contains more than four hundred chemicals. It originally came from India and has since spread to the rest of the world. Also, people have given marijuana many nicknames, like weed, pot, grass, and hash.

Recreational marijuana can be use in many different ways. People can smoke it as a joint (cigarette), brew it as tea, or even mix it with food! On the other hand, skunkweed (skunk), a strong type of marijuana, can be as potent since it contains two to three times THC (tetrahydrocannabionl) as other types.

In the previous papers that I’ve done, I have mentioned that marijuana can makes people feel dizzy, relax, chilled, animated, and sleepy. But, in this article, they also mentioned that marijuana could make people release their inhibitions and make people feel hungry. In addition to that, marijuana can cause nausea in some people in spite of the fact that it mostly has anti-nausea effect.

Taking marijuana can damage the ability to concentrate and decrease motivation and affect psychological development. Drug takers usually become anxious, suspicious and paranoid. In a word, taking marijuana will increase the risk of serious psychiatric malady.

In the United Kingdom, marijuana remains illegal (not including prescription marijuana) and it is a Class B drug. “The maximum penalty for possession is five years in prison. For supplying you can get 14 years in prison. You can get an unlimited fine for both.”

This BBC article is very useful and reliable. I learned new things from it, for example, some other names that people called marijuana, which appear in movies and people’s conversations a lot. I also learned about the origin of marijuana and it answered the questions that I had before I started the research!

**Drug: Marijuana – Books**

Learn to Say No! Cannabis is the title of the book, it was written by Angela Royston. First published in Great Britain by Heinemann Library. I relied on page 6~8, 13, and 21, which discussed some facts of marijuana.

I thought that cannabis and marijuana are different names for the same thing, but this book proved me wrong! The book says that cannabis sativa, or cannabis has four different forms and each has a different name – hashish, sinsemilla, cannabis oil, and marijuana. Sinsemilla is the strongest one, which made from the male flowers of plant. Hashish is less stronger than sinsemilla but stronger than marijuana, about five to eight times amount of THC. The most useful one might be the cannabis oil because doctor said it should be prescribed as a medicine for diseases, for example, it can reduce the painful effects of chemotherapy (Royston 6).

Another thing that I learned and makes me astonished is that, “Cannabis contains more than 400 different chemicals. When it is smoked it produces over 2000 chemicals, which are breathed into the lungs. Many of these chemicals damage to the lungs and other parts of the body” (Royston 7). I know that smoking is really bad for out health, especially lungs, but I did not know that it contains and produces so many kinds of chemicals! Normally, a cigarette contains about fifteen mg (15/1000 gram) of tar but joint contains three times tar more than that (Royston 13).

Marijuana is an illegal drug in most countries and people who hold a joint are legally guilty of possession (Royston 8). Drugs are all very expansive and more than a third of adult Americans have tried marijuana. In 1998, more than 700,000 people were arrested. Each year, the United States spends about twenty-seven billion try to stop drug abuse (Royston 21).

This book is very interesting and it is very easy to understand because it is not an encyclopedia but a book for kids. I learned lots of new things from this book that I did not learn from Internet. Although learning from the Internet is more convenient, it is more useful and reliable to learn something from books.

**Drug – Marijuana: What I Learned**

We have been working on this special individual project in the past few weeks and I really enjoyed doing this. I have been finding out lots of knowledge and information that I don’t know before. Also, this project is fun and beneficial because it is about what we are interested in.

Before I researched this topic, I knew nothing about marijuana except that it is a kind of drug. Now, I know its origin, how it affects people’s health, and the ingredients inside it that cause the effects. Aside from this, it is nice to learn something new that is not from our boring textbook.

From my research, I found out that most of the marijuana takers have been using marijuana. Since they were in high school. It is easy to understand why, because there are lots of parties and activities in high school. This allows people to get crazy easily and become too hyper. People can then make mistakes, which are hard to redeem.

As a high school student, I think it is really helpful for me to know some facts about marijuana, so that I can help some teenagers who are the same age as me. They might have some questions about marijuana. Additionally, I can remind myself to not make the same mistake as those teenage addicts did.

Over the past few years, I have heard ‘pot’ and ‘weed’ many times in the movies and books, however, I did not understand what it meant until I did my research project recently. In this project, I learned not only the negative side of marijuana, but also the positive side. For example, it has been used in medical treatments and it can cure pain.

In the end, I would like to say that I have no regrets about doing this project and it is not a waste of time. I think marijuana is a serious problem, which can be changed if government put it into consideration. Thank you very much for giving us the chance to do a research project about what we are interested in and which can impact on our life.

**Works Cited**

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1. Quote from Oxford Dictionary [↑](#footnote-ref-1)