



## **Cannabis: the miracle drug that must be legalised**

by Izzy

Drugs are very often abused by drug dealers, drug users, young teens trying to seem cool, etc. However, certain forms of drugs, such as CBD from cannabis, can be used for therapeutic purposes. In this report, we are going to be looking at the positives and negatives of the drug, whether it really helps people and whether it should be legal for medical purposes.

CBD (cannabidiol) is the cannabis sativa plant and its more famous sibling is THC (tetrahydrocannabinol). These plants have roots in Central Asia and the plant is believed to have first been medically used in 750BC. THC and CBD are just two of the plant's more than 100 cannabinoids, but CBD is deemed more appropriate for medical purposes as, unlike THC, it does not cause any type of high or intoxication.

One of the main uses of CBD is to treat anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Researchers believe that it may affect the way that your brain receptors respond to serotonin, a chemical that is linked to mental health. Receptors are tiny proteins that are attached to your cells that receive chemical messages and help your cells respond to different stimuli. Studies have found that a 600mg dose of CBD helped people with social anxiety - so much that they were able to do tasks that they might otherwise have found difficult, such as giving a public speech. Moreover, studies using animals have shown that CBD can reduce stress, improve symptoms of PTSD and help those with insomnia.

Another prominent use of CBD is to help reduce seizures. It has had press attention before as a possible treatment for epilepsy, but research for this is still in the early days. The American Epilepsy Society has stated that cannabidiol research offers hope for those with seizure disorders, and that research is currently being conducted to better understand safe use of the drug. A study from 2016 worked with 214 people with epilepsy. The study participants added oral doses from 2 - 5mg of CBD per day to their existing anti-epilepsy medication. The participants were monitored for 12 weeks and the outcome was that

participants had 36.5 percent seizures per month. However, severe adverse effects were recorded in 12 percent of participants. With more research into the safe and useful dosage, this could be a promising use of the drug.

Some studies have investigated the role of CBD in preventing cancer cell growth. Unfortunately research for this is still in early stages. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) says that CBD may help to make cancer symptoms less severe and help to remove cancer treatment side effects. In addition, the action of CBD that is promising for cancer treatment is its ability to moderate inflammation and change how cells reproduce, meaning that CBD has the effect of reducing the ability of some types of tumor cells to reproduce. However, the NCI doesn't fully endorse any form of cannabis as a cancer treatment.

However, despite the many benefits of CBD, the forms we find in the shops are comparatively weak, and, according to the NHS, 'there's no guarantee these are of good quality or provide any health benefits'. Cannabis could be a good alternative. Cannabis-based products are only available on prescription, and the prescription of these drugs is very limited. If cannabis could be more widely available then those with medical problems may have some relief. Do you believe that cannabis should be legalised?