

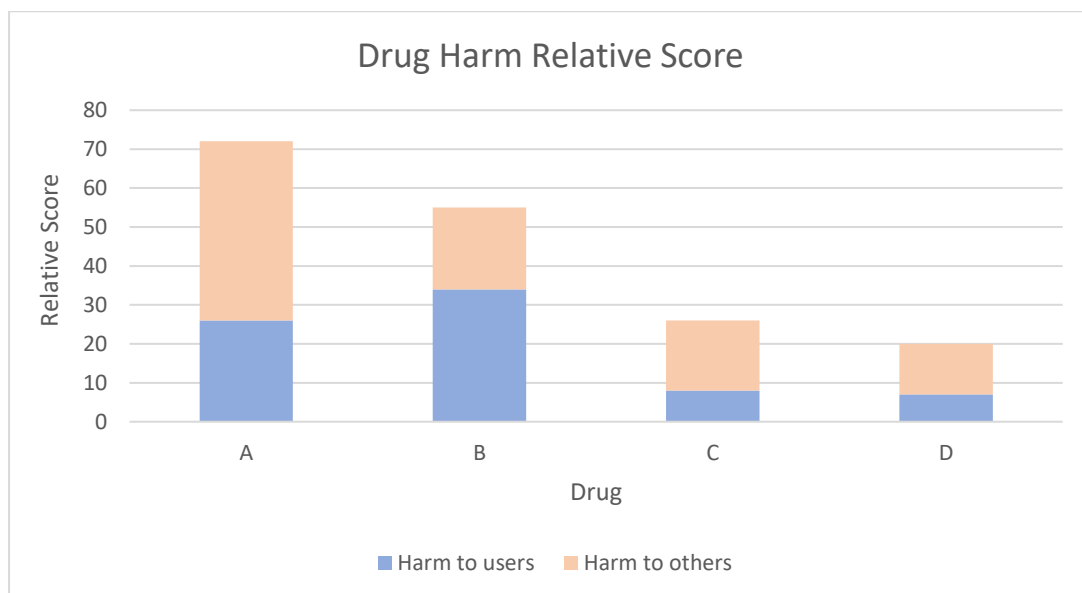
Weeding Out Weed Laws

Why illegal marijuana should be a thing of the past

There is one law that pokes its nose into the lives of average civilians and interferes with their harmless pleasure; there is one law that bars suffering patients from accessing the pain medication they would literally die for; there is one law that is capable of criminalizing state law-abiding Americans.

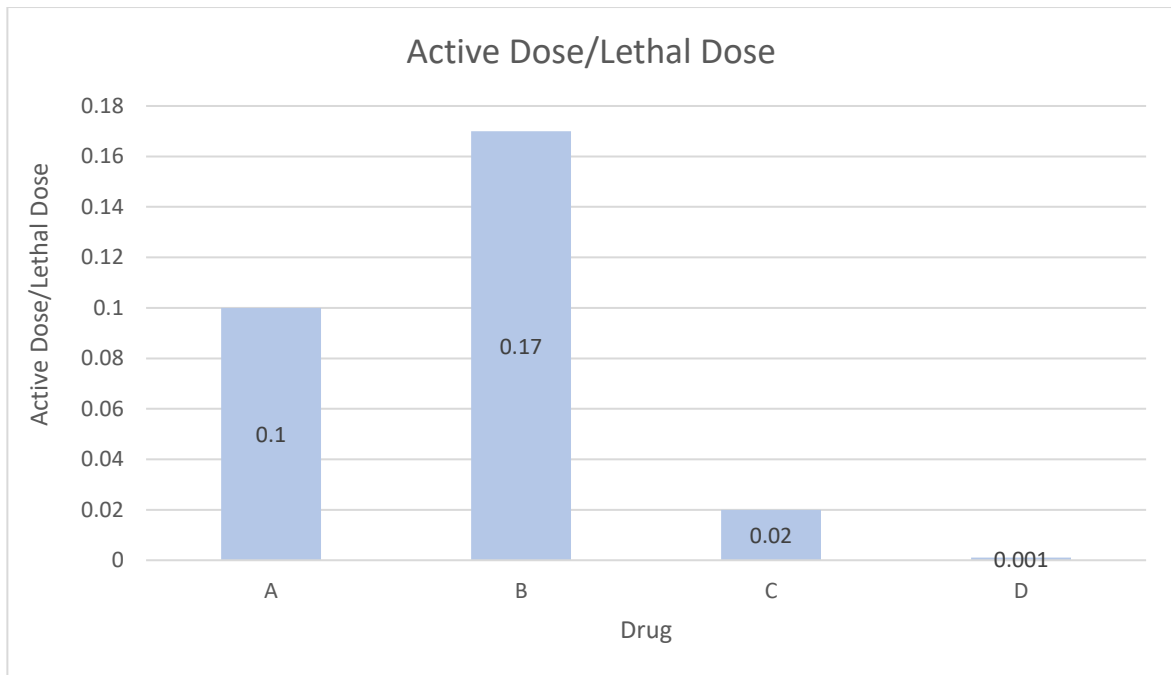
There is one marijuana prohibition act that demonizes an innocent blossom that is no more detrimental to one's health than fermented barley, while the latter currently has full legal status and is widely consumed around the globe. *Hold on*, any intelligent being like you would wonder, *if cannabis is judicially forbidden in many countries, then how on earth can it be less evil than a lawful glass of beer or wine?*

As the nerdy person I am, I will let numbers and science speak on my behalf on this matter. Below is a graph comparing four types of drugs in terms of harm to users and harm to others combined, according to published research. The drugs are given the pseudonyms A, B, C, and D for convenience's sake, and are shown from the most harmful to the least harmful.



Relative harm of Drugs A, B, C, and D (Nutt, King, & Phillips, 2010)

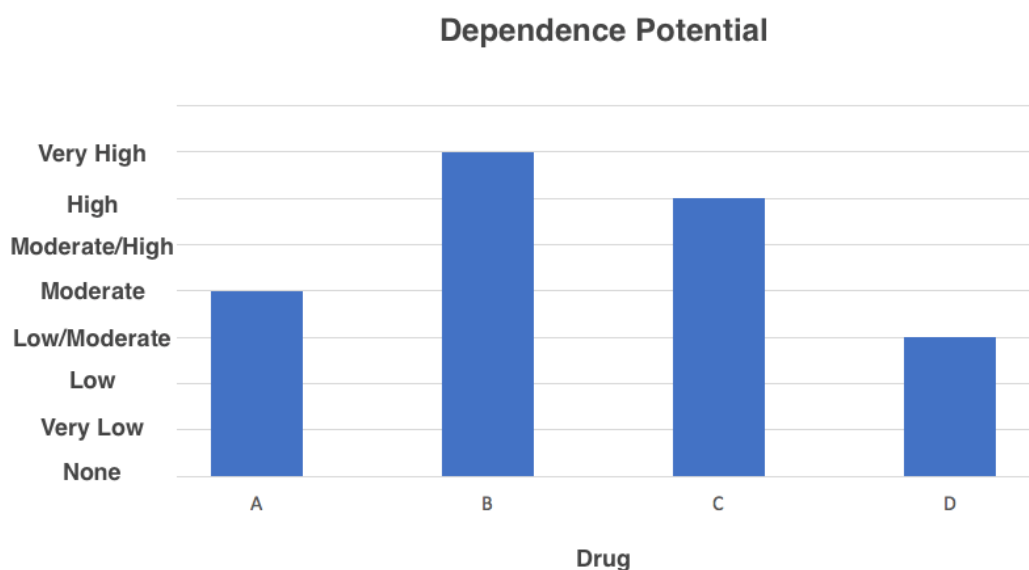
Next, here's a second diagram demonstrating each substance's active-to-lethal dose ratio, which is a measurement of the potential of overdosing.



Potential of overdosing of Drugs A, B, C and D (Gable, 2006)

Drug B is winning by a landslide, Drug A in quick succession, Drug C way back behind, and... wait, did I forget to plot Drug D there?

Here's the third and final chart about the dependence potential of the chemicals, which can be used as an indicator of the ease of developing an addiction or dependence. Drug B and Drug C are listed as having high dependence potential, while Drug A and Drug D are less susceptible to the problem.



Potential for addiction of Drugs A, B, C and D (Gable, 2006)

A short summary here:

	Drug A	Drug B	Drug C	Drug D
Harm (Relative score)	72	55	26	20
Active/Lethal Ratio	0.1	0.17	0.02	0.001
Dependence Potential	Moderate	Very High	High	Low to Moderate

Two of the drugs in this quartet - alcohol and cigarettes/tobacco - can be legally distributed to persons of age in most parts of the world. The remaining two are both classified as Schedule I drugs in the US, namely heroin, the A+ of destructive drugs, and cannabis. Go ahead and place your bet on which is which before I reveal the answer. Ready?

(dramatic drum roll)

Drug A	Drug B	Drug C	Drug D
Alcohol	Heroin	Tobacco	Cannabis

What have the facts laid out for us? Alcohol could be on a par with heroin in the harm scale. Cigarettes, with nicotine being the component responsible, are almost as addictive as heroin. And marijuana is the least harmful, the most unlikely to be overdosed on, and the least addictive among the four. Turns out the legal status of a drug correlates to its potential dangers rather poorly. Mind blown.

Bottom line: if the world has no problems with legal booze and cigarettes, then why should we make a big fuss about legal weed?

In fact, modern studies have not only ruled out many of the fabricated cannabis harms but also suggested potential medical applications of the buds, particularly in pain management, seizure control, and depression treatment. But if it is less dangerous than alcohol or tobacco and might bring medical advancements, then how did the plant manage to gain and maintain a legendary prohibition status alongside real demons like heroin?

The ugly truth is the history of marijuana prohibition is loaded with dirty racism and is nothing more than propaganda tactics employed by the US government. Rumors and conspiracy theories of state-corporate collusion are also not unheard of.

Believe it or not, pot has been legal for the majority of time in human civilization. The tables weren't turned until the early 1900s when America was seeing a huge influx of Mexican immigrants shortly after the Mexican Revolution. American authorities responded to the boom in the southerner population with dominance and discrimination. Think of how governing bodies treat refugees in Europe nowadays.

You can almost imagine a scene like this happening in the lawmakers' ivory tower –
 “The Mexicans are flooding into Texas! We need to keep an eye on them lest they disrupt the order!”
 “Hmmm...we need an excuse to detain them and deport them if necessary...but what crime could we use to charge them?”
 “Eureka! The Mexicans love smoking pot! What better way to control an ethnic group than to attack their culture!”

Maybe this sounds too theatric, I admit, but you get the idea. Despite knowing full well that cannabis is about as problematic as tea, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics took advantage of

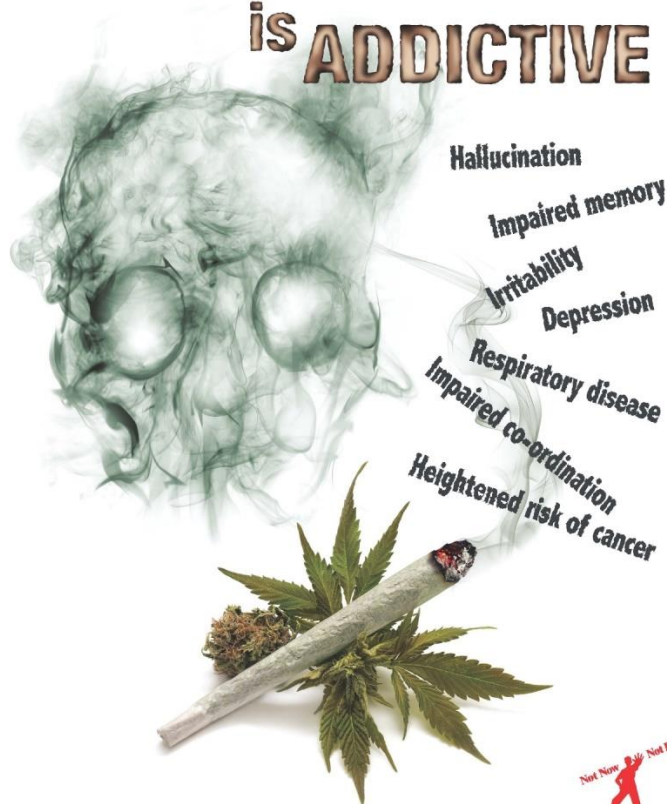
people's fear towards the immigrants to fuel the manipulative marijuana propaganda. Several decades later, President Nixon took it a step further and declared war on drugs, with nations worldwide soon following suit.

To make things worse, the US government hasn't been doing a good job dodging suspicion. Since cannabis is placed on the Schedule I checklist, research on using the plant as a cancer or HIV treatment alternative is nearly impossible to conduct. Guess who would benefit from blocking the development of affordable, non-patented medications? Pharmaceutical companies, no surprise! To some, this accusation smells like plain rotten corruption; while this is hard, if not impossible, to prove (unless they keep letting Trump covfefe on his Twitter, of course), the logical deduction there sounds legit.

In a nutshell: Marijuana prohibition is racist, corrupt, and unjust. There's no place for that kind of nonsense in a civilized society.

While some countries have started phasing out obsolete drug laws, Hong Kong, or rather Asia in general, doesn't seem to be catching up with trend. The Dutchmen up north are busy filling up their country with coffee shops that don't even sell coffee (they sell legal pot, in case you are wondering). Half of America has decriminalized or legalized marijuana to different extents. Uruguay has taken it as far as completely legalizing the possession, sales, and cultivation of the plant. Meanwhile, on the other side of Earth, the use of marijuana, whether recreational or medical, remains a taboo in Hong Kong, with no prospect of lifting the ban. Most of the general public still associates weed with triads and lowlifes, thanks to the government's drug-shaming "not now, not ever" campaign that never properly acknowledges the medical potentials of marijuana; instead, it "educates" the general public with graphic content, trying to scare people away from drugs. Most people have therefore overlooked the therapeutic value of cannabis, making it hard for Hong Kong to gain sufficient momentum to push for its legalization.

Cannabis is ADDICTIVE



Help/Report: 186 186

Narcotics Division, Security Bureau

Action Committee Against Narcotics

www.nd.gov.hk



(Narcotics Division, n.d.)

See, kids, cannabis = skull = death, so don't you ever smoke weed or you will die – the government

There is no reason cannabis prohibition should still linger on. If Big Government and Big Pharma insist on feeding us faulty information to propagate the War on Drugs, it is high time (no shame for the pun) we put on our tin foil hats, educate ourselves on the truth of the plant, and put an end to irrational fear.

TL;DR: Learn the facts. The War on Drugs isn't working. Legalize it.

References:

Gable, R. S. (2006). Acute toxicity of drugs versus regulatory status. In J.M. Fish (Ed.), *Drugs and society: US public policy* (pp.149-162), New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Narcotics Division, Security Bureau. (n.d.). *Cannabis poster*. Retrieved from http://www.nd.gov.hk/pdf/cannabis_poster_eng.pdf

Nutt, D. J., King, L. A., & Phillips, L. D. (2010). Drug harms in the UK: A multicriteria decision analysis. *The Lancet*, 376(9752), 1558-1565.