

Legal Marijuana Could Fix Opioid Problem, Studies Show



Summary: New studies show that legalized medicinal marijuana can curb America's opioid addiction.

Marijuana has long been rumored to be a possible solution to helping Americans struggling with opioid addiction, but now two studies have come along that validate that claim, according to [CNN](#).

The studies were published on Monday, and their findings show that using medical marijuana may help curb the opioid problem in the United States.

"The studies, published Monday in the journal JAMA Internal Medicine, compared opioid prescription patterns in states that have enacted medical cannabis laws with those that have not. One of the studies looked at opioid prescriptions covered by Medicare Part D between 2010 and 2015, while the other looked at opioid prescriptions covered by Medicaid between 2011 and 2016," CNN stated.

The researchers of the studies saw that states that allowed legalized medical marijuana had fewer daily doses of opioids prescribed.

David Bradford, a professor at the University of Georgia who led the study, told CNN that it "adds one more brick in the wall in the argument that cannabis clearly has medical applications."

Bradford's research focused on Medicare, particularly the program Part D, which is an optional prescription drug benefit plan. Medicare Part D has over 42 million Americans enrolled over the age of 65.

Fighting America's opioid addiction is one of the Trump administration's main platforms. According to CNN, the US is experiencing one of the worst opioid epidemics in history. Since the year 2000, there have been over 500,000 opioid-related deaths, and today, more than 90 Americans die a day from an opioid-related overdose.

"We have had overuse of certain prescription opioids over the years, and it's certainly contributed to the opioid crisis that we're feeling," Dr. Kevin Hill, an addiction psychiatrist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and an assistant professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, told CNN. "I don't think that's the only reason, but certainly, it was too easy at many points to get prescriptions for opioids."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that opioid overdoses now usurp shooting deaths and car accidents as the most common cause of accidental death in this country.

Hill said that marijuana and opioids use the same pathways, which would explain how legalized marijuana would provide a similar fix to that given by opioids. However, unlike opioids, marijuana is less addictive and there have been no marijuana overdose deaths reported in the US.

"All drugs of abuse operate using some shared pathways. For example, cannabinoid receptors and opioid receptors coincidentally happen to be located very close by in many places in the brain," Hill said. "So it stands to reason that a medication that affects one system might affect the other."

- [Recreational Marijuana Will Be Legal in California in 2018](#)
- [Study Links Legalized Marijuana to Car Crashes](#)
- [Study Finds Link in Marijuana Stores with Increased Property Crime](#)

What do you think of the two new studies' findings? Let us know in the comments below.