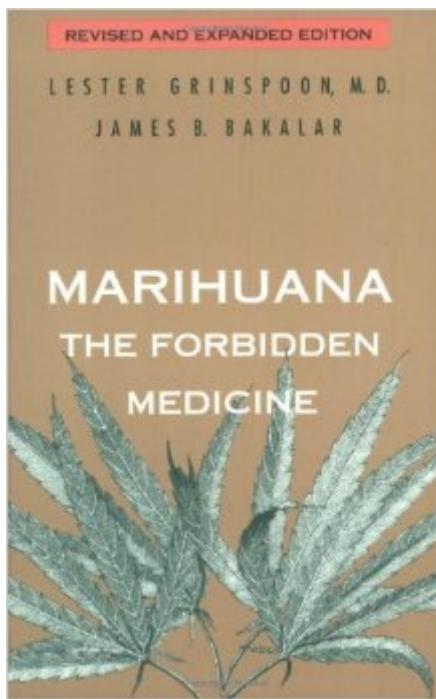


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Marihuana: The Forbidden Medicine



Synopsis

This revised text describes the medical benefits of marijuana, explains why it has been forbidden, and puts forward arguments for legislation to make it available for patients who need it. The argument is supported by accounts from individuals with various ailments.

Book Information

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The authors argue that "it has become clear that cannabis is a remarkably versatile as well as a safe medicine". Grinspoon began studying marijuana in 1967 with the preconceived notion it is harmful. He not only found it beneficial to health but predicts its legalization. He is concerned that many people are being imprisoned for using marijuana. The intoxicating portion of marijuana comes from a resin produced by the female plant only during reproduction as a guard against heat and moisture. More resin is produced in areas with higher temperatures. The pure resin, charas, is hashish and is the most potent. Ganja is the flower top. Bhang is dried and crushed leaves, seeds, and stems and is half to a third the potency of ganja. Marijuana plants contain 1 to 5% tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which is psychoactive and stimulates brain nerve receptors that control body movements. This reduces spasms and calms body movement pain. Marijuana was used as a medicine for at least 5,000 years in China. From 1840 to 1900, over 100 medical papers published findings of medicinal uses for marijuana. These articles found marijuana useful for relieving pain in many medical situations, asthma, postpartum psychosis, bronchitis, gonorrhea, and migraine prevention. A 1940s study in New York City found most myths about marijuana causing aggressive

and antisocial behavior were false. A 1942 study indicated marijuana might be useful in treating depression, opiate addiction, and loss of appetite. Harry Anslinger and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics denounced these 1940s studies as unscientific. The military contracted with the Arthur D. Little Company to determine if there were any military uses for marijuana.

As nearly every other reviewer of this great title has already mentioned, this is a brilliant and comprehensive introduction to Cannabis or Marijuana. It covers many aspects, including the laws now governing the use of this useful plant, as well as medical uses, social uses (yes pleasure is not yet illegal and should not be shameful either), as well as the personal accounts of a variety of users who have found it beneficial. It also touches on its benefits for a variety of mental illnesses. And it is in this area only that I would like to add a little warning. Though it can assist with various mental health conditions there is always a need for care. I suffer a mental illness and find that as long as I use it sparingly, i.e. a very small quantity once a week at most, then its effects are greatly beneficial in many ways. However if I smoke too much (very small quantities on a daily basis) then I begin to lose the plot and generally life becomes overly chaotic and troublesome. I do know someone else with mental illness who uses it regularly and finds it helps keep him on the rails, so people just need to be aware and honest with themselves about its use, and cease if it causes them problems. Medically I would highly recommend a book titled "Cannabis and Cancer" for a real look at medical use for an elderly couple struggling where the husband was suffering with advanced prostate cancer. For a look at the potentially devastating effects on mental health in susceptible people, I highly recommend reading a book called "Matters to a Head, Cannabis, mental illness and recovery".

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