

# Medical Marijuana

Should Medical Marijuana be made legal in New Zealand so that patients who are chronically ill have easier access to the drug?

## Introduction

Currently in New Zealand there have been numerous discussions of the use of medical marijuana as it is currently illegal. Patients seeking medical cannabis to ease their symptoms must go through many obstacles to get the drug (Kirk, 2017).

There has been some research with the chemicals in the marijuana plant, showing that these chemicals could help patients with many different illnesses and so many people argue that the drug should be decriminalized or made legal in New Zealand, (Drug Abuse, 2017).

## Implications for Practice

Currently if patients would like to try medical cannabis to help with their symptoms they must talk to a doctor who must write an application to the Ministry of Health. Many doctors discourage their patients to seek medical cannabis as they don't want to bare the potential risk of prescribing the drug (Davidson, 2017).

## Conclusion

While there is still more research to be done for medical cannabis to be made legal in New Zealand there are many promising aspects of the drug. The positive effect the drug has on children who suffer from epilepsy is a sign of hope for parents. Many doctors don't want to be associated with prescribing the drug as they don't want any risks. The government are now encouraging doctors to have an open mind when prescribing the drug as there are many medicines available.

## Literature Review

The literature identified many positive and negative implications for the use of medical cannabis. While many people compare medical cannabis with recreational cannabis, there have been numerous studies that show medical marijuana can be beneficial to patients. Evidence shows that medical cannabis is beneficial for patients who have been diagnosed with cancer and are going through chemotherapy, patients with chronic pain and muscle problems, Tourette's syndrome, anxiety, sleeping problems and seizures, (Drug Foundation, 2009). However a disadvantage of medical cannabis, if made legal in New Zealand, there could be a black-market like the market for strong analgesics (Kirk, 2017).

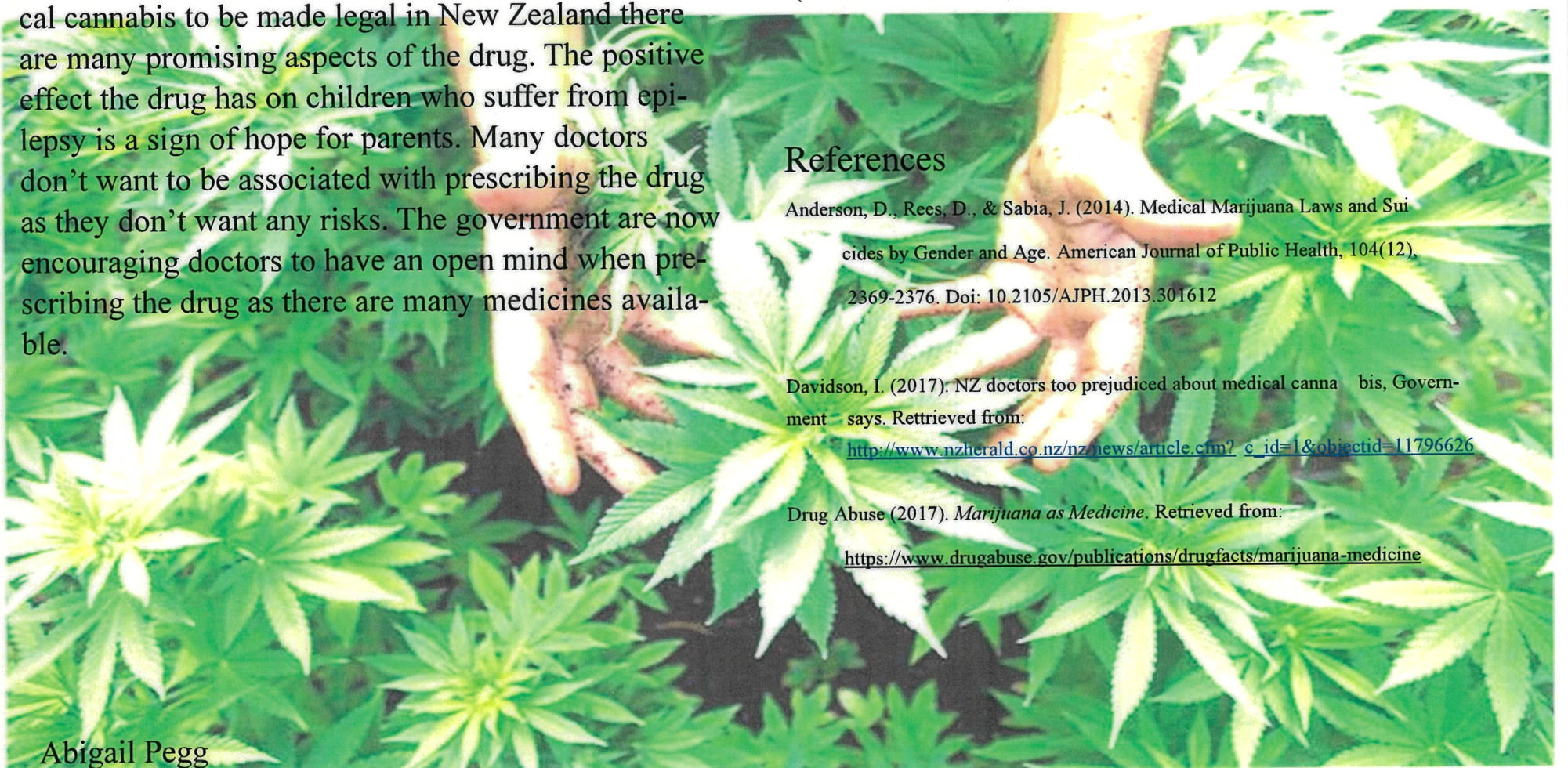
Legalizing medical marijuana would mean that the penalties for using the drug medically, possessing and cultivating the drug for medical purposes, would have to be removed (Anderson, Rees & Sabia, 2014).

## Recommendation

There are several patients in New Zealand who are already using the drug that has been approved by the Ministry of Health (Norml New Zealand, 2015). There should be change for patients who want to access this medicine and not have the difficulty of attaining it or are in fear of being prosecuted (Davidson, 2017)

## References

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## Summary

Currently in New Zealand there have been numerous discussions of the use of medical marijuana as it is currently illegal. During my time on many clinical placements I have had several patients talk about the drug and express their desire to try it to see if it helps with their chronic pain. I am aware that patients wanting the drug and meet the criteria must go through many obstacles to get the drug. In this review, I will look at the disadvantages and advantages of medical marijuana, I will form a review question using the PECOT model and I will discuss the implications for practice.

I decided to present my literature review by poster as I believe it is an effective way of conveying information well. Posters are a common form of presenting information in the health community. Posters is an easy and effective way of information people about the topic and are able to raise awareness of the topic. Communicating using posters and clear and concise text should get people more engaged and help them understand.

PECOT Category	Information relating to question	Explanation
Population	Patients who are undergoing chemotherapy (used for nausea and vomiting), chronic pain, muscle problems (multiple sclerosis), anxiety, sleeping problems and movement problems.	I identified this population as the focus group as it is the group that is associated with using medical marijuana.
Exposure/ Environmental (intervention)	Patients in New Zealand who have been exposed to medical cannabis	There have been some patients in New Zealand who have had approval from the ministry of health to use medical marijuana.
Comparison/ Control	New Zealand patient who have been prescribed medical Marijuana and the patients who have not been prescribed the drug	I would like to compare the outcomes of those who were prescribed that drug and those who were not. I also feel it is important to discuss the advantages and disadvantages and why there is a demand for the drug in New Zealand now.
Outcome	Patients who have been prescribed medical marijuana in New Zealand that has been approved by the Ministry of Health	The ultimate outcome for this literature review is to determine the health benefits and disadvantages of using medical marijuana
Time	There is no exact time for a patient to be on medical marijuana	According to the Ministry of Health and the New Zealand drug foundation, they state that there is still a lot of research that needs to be done. Because there are positives and negatives with the drug, researches are still uncertain what time frame a patient would be given the drug.

## References

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Norml New Zealand. (2015). Patients and the law. Retrieved from:

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