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Denied: DEA refuses to reclassify marijuana, claims it's as dangerous as heroin

Monday, July 25, 2011 by: Ethan A. Huff, staff writer

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(NaturalNews) The US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has finally acknowledged a nine-year-old petition filed by The Coalition for Rescheduling Cannabis to reclassify marijuana as a schedule III, IV,

or V drug, rather than its current, and more-serious, schedule I classification.

The acknowledgment, however, was an official denial of the petition based on claims that there are no studies to prove the medicinal value of marijuana, and that the plant is basically as unsafe as heroin.

Back in May, [NaturalNews](#) reported that a group of marijuana advocacy groups had filed a lawsuit against the [federal government](#) for failing to even acknowledge their [petition](#) to reschedule marijuana, which had been filed roughly nine years earlier.

By ignoring the petition, the federal [government](#) was invariably in violation of the Administrative Procedures Act, which requires it to respond to petitions within a reasonable amount of time (http://www.naturalnews.com/032546_m...).

If the agency had complied with the petition, it would have acknowledged that marijuana does, indeed, have legitimate medical use, and that its [abuse](#) potential is not as extreme as a schedule I classification deems it to be.

And by rescheduling marijuana to at least a schedule III classification rather than a schedule I, federal policy would have become more in line with those of the 16-and-counting states that have already legalized marijuana for medical purposes (<http://medicalmarijuana.procon.org/...>).

The agency's flat-out denial of the petition, however, shows that it plans to continue willfully ignoring the facts about marijuana, including the hundreds of [studies](#) -- many of these are peer-reviewed studies -- that suggest not only that marijuana has [medicinal](#) benefits, but also that it is [safe](#).

According to ProCon.org, for instance, there are 33 studies, 17 of which involve humans, that suggest definitive medicinal [benefits](#) from using marijuana (<http://medicalmarijuana.procon.org/...>).

There is, however, absolutely no evidence to back the DEA's claim that "marijuana has a high potential for abuse, has no accepted medical use in the United States, and lacks an acceptable level of safety for use even under medical supervision," as [DEA](#) Administrator Michele M. Leonhart falsely stated in her announcement on behalf of the agency's decision in the matter. In fact, a report issued by the US Institute of Medicine (IOM) back in 1999 states the following contradiction to the DEA's [claims](#):

"Scientific data indicate the potential therapeutic value of cannabinoid [drugs](#), primarily THC, for pain relief, control of nausea and vomiting, and appetite stimulation" (<http://medicalmarijuana.procon.org/...>).

More recent studies than this have found that cannabinoids help reduce inflammation, prevent [dementia](#), and even kill cancer cells. Perhaps this is why the federal government -- the very same federal government that has denounced marijuana as dangerous and medically [useless](#) -- filed a patent on all medicinal uses of [cannabis](#).

The patent states that cannabinoids are "useful in the [treatment](#) of prophylaxis of wide variety of oxidation associated diseases, such as ischemic, age-related, inflammatory and autoimmune diseases."

The patent goes on to state that marijuana is neuroprotective, and that it limits "neurological damage, such as stroke or trauma, or in the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's



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disease, Parkinson's disease and HIV dementia" (<http://patft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-...>).

A recent report in *TIME* magazine also explains that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an investigational new **drug** application (IND) in 2006 for Sativex, an "inhalable marijuana-derived drug" that contains both THC and CBD, the two main active ingredients in marijuana. Apparently a supposedly dangerous drug with no therapeutic value suddenly has potential value once a drug company has found a way to steal and patent it (<http://healthland.time.com/2011/07/...>).

So much for the idea that marijuana is both medically useless and harmful.

So why does the federal government continue to denounce the merits of marijuana even after it filed a patent on any and all of its medicinal benefits? For the same reason that the FDA acknowledges the supposed **health benefits** of pharmaceutical drugs while denying the **health** benefits of plant and herbal extracts: money and power.

Government agencies like **the DEA** and FDA work to protect the interests of the industries that keep them afloat, which in this case happens to be primarily the **drug industry**, rather than the interests of the people. By continuing to restrict access to marijuana on the flawed grounds that it is unsafe and ineffective, the DEA is essentially ensuring that only the drug **industry** has access to it.

At the same time, the agency is also preventing millions of Americans from accessing a **natural** plant that is capable of potentially treating and curing disease without dangerous side effects, which in turn has defaulted many of these same Americans to patented, side effect-ridden pharmaceutical drugs as their only perceived option (<http://www.naturalnews.com/Marijuan...>).

Sources for this story include:

<http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2011/07/...>

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