

Myth # 5: Marijuana is a dangerous drug.

Fact: "Tetrahydrocannabinol [marijuana's primary active ingredient] is a very safe drug. Laboratory animals (rats, mice, dogs, monkeys) can tolerate doses of up to 1,000 mg/kg (milligrams per kilogram). This would be equivalent to a 70 kg [155 lb] person swallowing 70 grams [2.5 oz] of the drug -- about 5,000 times more than is required to produce a high.¹

Fact: A John Hopkins study published in May 1999 examined marijuana's effects on cognition on 1,318 participants over a 15-year period. Researchers reported "no significant differences in cognitive decline between heavy users, light users, and nonusers of cannabis."²

Fact: "The leading causes of death in 2000 were tobacco (435,000 deaths; 18.1% of total US deaths), poor diet and physical inactivity (400,000 deaths; 16.6%), and alcohol consumption (85,000 deaths; 3.5%). Other actual causes of death were microbial agents (75,000), toxic agents (55,000), motor vehicle crashes (43,000), incidents involving firearms (29,000), sexual behaviors (20,000), and illicit use of drugs (17,000). Marijuana has never caused death.^{3,4}

¹ Iversen, Leslie L., PhD, FRS, "The Science of Marijuana" (London, England: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 178, citing House of Lords, Select Committee on Science and Technology, "Cannabis -- The Scientific and Medical Evidence" (London, England: The Stationery Office, Parliament, 1998).

² Constantine G. Lyketsos, Elizabeth Garret, Kung-Yee Liang, and James C. Anthony "Cannabis Use and Cognitive Decline in Persons under 65 Years of Age," *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Vol 149, No.9

³ Mokdad, Ali H., PhD, James S. Marks, MD, MPH, Donna F. Stroup, PhD, Msc, Julie L. Gerberding DM MPH, "Actual Causes of Death in the United States, 2000" *Journal of the American Medical Association*, March 10, 2004, Vol 291, No 10 pp 1238, 1241.

⁴ Drug Abuse Warning Network data at www.samhsa.gov, also "Marijuana and Medicine: Assessing the Science Base," Div. Of Neuroscience and Behavioral Research, Institute of Medicine, see www.nap.edu/html/marimed/ ; also U. S. Drug Enforcement Administration, "In the Matter of Marijuana Rescheduling Petition (Docket #86-22) Sept 6 1988, p 57.