

Medical Marijuana Laws: New Perspective from Thailand

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Abstract

Marijuana is an important plant that has medical property. However, it can also induce addiction in the user. Marijuana is accepted as an additive substance and it is usually controlled by narcotics drug laws. In the present day, the legalization of medical marijuana is an interesting aspect. In some countries such as USA, the medical marijuana laws are launched and become the interesting issue for discussion. Thailand, a tropical country in Indochina, also has just launched specific marijuana laws. In the present article, the authors discuss on the medical marijuana with special focus on the new perspective from Thailand.

Keywords: Marijuana, laws, Thailand, narcotic, medical

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INTRODUCTION

Marijuana is an important plant that is well-grown in tropical climate. This plant has its interesting medical property for pain control; however, it can also cause the addiction. The use of marijuana is accepted for its important side effect to the user, induction of addiction. Generally, marijuana or cannabis is assigned as an additive substance. This substance is generally concerned for abuse. The use of marijuana is classically controlled by narcotics drug laws. Nevertheless, the recent concept for legalization on medical marijuana use becomes an interesting issue for discussion.

At present, the medical marijuana laws are launched and used in some countries such as USA. A wide discussion on the new laws becomes the hot issue in both legal and medical aspect. After USA, the legalization of marijuana occurs in several countries including to Thailand, a tropical country in Indochina. Thailand has just launched specific marijuana laws since early 2019. In the present article, the authors specifically discuss on the medical marijuana with special reference on the Thai perspective.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA LAWS

Marijuana has already been implemented in some countries for a short period. In USA, the laws have been implemented in some states

[1–3]. Regarding medical marijuana laws in USA, Mead noted that “federal and state laws regarding the medical use of cannabis and cannabinoids are in conflict and have led to confusion among patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers [2].” The difficult is on how to control the product sale, especially those sold on internet [2]. The legalization of marijuana results in a significant increase use of this substance. Maxwell JC, Mendelson noted for “increases in marijuana use preceded legalization in 2012” in USA [4]. The legalization of medical marijuana becomes the model for several countries. In Europe, the specific laws have been launched. Nevertheless, the use of herbal cannabis or its extracts are presently not approved by both the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [5]. However, the derivatives of cannabis or cannabinoids are already approved by FDA of USA, Canada and many European countries [5]. Canada, Germany, Israel and the Netherlands are the examples [4]. The approval for legalization of medical marijuana in Europe, such as in Germany [6–7], adds the effect on the global reconsideration for medical marijuana use.

In Asia, the legalization of medical marijuana becomes the big discussing issue in both medical and laws society. In several areas of

Asia, especially for Indochina, the problem of narcotics drug use is still presently observable. Control of narcotics drug by laws is generally performed. Marijuana is also a specific additive substance under control. Ablin et al. summarized the lesson learnt from Israel and Canada and concluded that “Growing marijuana by patients for their medical use should not be allowed [8].” In Thailand, a tropical country in Indochina, marijuana has ever controlled under narcotics drug laws. However, the situation has just been changed. Legalization has just been effective since early 2019 and this becomes a new interesting issue.

LEGALIZATION OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA IN THAILAND

As already noted, legalization of medical marijuana in Thailand has just been effective since 2019. Medical marijuana use has just been allowed. The registration is the basic process for control of the use. Special allowance is given to medical center and research center. Specific allowance is also given to the foreign patient under medical marijuana use. After start on the implementation in registration process in early March 2019, there are several persons register on the medical marijuana. Of interest, this might imply that the previous legal control on marijuana as narcotics was not effective and this might further imply the similar situation to other illegal drug such as opium, heroin and amphetamine.

As a future perspective, the number of registers user should be increased and the free sale of the product becomes an issue to be surveillance. Similar to the observation in other countries that legalization of medical marijuana has previously been implemented, the increase use of marijuana might be observed. The control of the use will become the big issue to be managed. Also, there might be a risk for increased use of other non-allowable narcotics.

CONCLUSION

Legalization of medical marijuana becomes a new challenge in Thailand. The effect of the legalization has to be strictly followed. The

challenge on legal control for other narcotics drug use might occur and becomes a possible new problem in the future.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

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