

# Is cannabis the answer to Booze Britain's problems?

December 1 2009

---

Substituting cannabis in place of more harmful drugs may be a winning strategy in the fight against substance misuse. Research published in BioMed Central' open access *Harm Reduction Journal* features a poll of 350 cannabis users, finding that 40% used cannabis to control their alcohol cravings, 66% as a replacement for prescription drugs and 26% for other, more potent, illegal drugs.

Amanda Reiman, from the University of California, Berkeley, USA, carried out the study at Berkeley Patient's Group, a medical cannabis dispensary. She said, "Substituting cannabis for [alcohol](#) has been described as a radical alcohol treatment protocol. This approach could be used to address heavy alcohol use in the British Isles - people might substitute cannabis, a potentially safer drug than alcohol with less negative side-effects, if it were socially acceptable and available".

Reiman found that 65% of people reported using cannabis as a substitute because it has less adverse side effects than alcohol, illicit or [prescription drugs](#), 34% because it has less withdrawal potential and 57.4% because cannabis provides better symptom management. She said, "This brings up two important points. First, self-determination, the right of an individual to decide which treatment or substance is most effective and least harmful for them. Secondly, the recognition that substitution might be a viable alternative to abstinence for those who can't or won't completely stop using psychoactive substances".

Speaking about legalization of cannabis, Reiman added, "The economic

hardship of The [Great Depression](#) helped bring about the end of alcohol prohibition. Now, as we are again faced with economic struggles, the US is looking to marijuana as a potential revenue generator. Public support is rising for the legalization of recreational use and remains high for the use of marijuana as a medicine. The hope is that this interest will translate into increased research support and the removal of current barriers to conducting such research, such as the Schedule I/Class B status of [marijuana](#)".

More information: [Cannabis](#) as a Substitute for Alcohol and Other Drugs, Amanda Reiman, *Harm Reduction Journal* (In Press), [www.harmreductionjournal.com/](http://www.harmreductionjournal.com/)

Source: BioMed Central ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Is cannabis the answer to Booze Britain's problems? (2009, December 1) retrieved 30 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-12-cannabis-booze-britain-problems.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.
---