

Uruguay marijuana law paves way for sleep study

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Uruguayan scientists, taking advantage of their country's legalization of marijuana, will study the long-term effects of the drug on sleep, a local newspaper reported.

A multi-disciplinary group of researchers from the University of the Republic will launch its study as soon as the law—approved in early December to regulate the production, sale and distribution of marijuana—goes into force, the El Observador newspaper reported Sunday.

The researchers aim to determine how and which of the 500 substances contained in the cannabis plant influence sleep quality.

"We have a historic opportunity permitted by the law," said biologist Burix Mechoso.

"There are uses and effects attributed to cannabis that interest us for analysis," added Atilio Falconi, a neurobiologist who specializes in sleep.

The marijuana law—the first like it in the world—was approved by lawmakers on the initiative of leftist President Jose Mujica. It is scheduled to come into practice by April 2014, after specific rules and regulations are devised.

It authorizes the production, distribution and sale of [cannabis](#), allows individuals to grow their own on a small scale, and creates consumer

clubs—all under state supervision and control.

The legalization of [marijuana](#) in the small country of just 3.2 million inhabitants has also drawn the interest of [pharmaceutical companies](#) around the world, who want to buy the drug for medical uses.

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