

Daniel Krolak

Mentor: Cathy Santanello

Title: *Perceptions of Medicinal Plant Use with Emphasis on Cannabis Use in Europe and the United States*

Abstract

Introduction: The use and legalization of medical marijuana has been a topic of debate for many years now. What are some of the barriers to medical marijuana use, and why are we still debating this topic? The purpose of this study was to determine the barriers to medical marijuana use and obtain information about public perceptions of the use of medical marijuana and medicinal plants.

Methods: An anonymous survey was distributed to participants online or in hard copy form. Participants were recruited online through social media and in person. Survey questions consisted of brief participant demographics, a history of herbal medicine or medical marijuana use, and perceptions of medical marijuana use and perceived barriers to use.

Results: Of the 190 survey participants, 15% reported using medical marijuana, though 93% believe that medical marijuana should be legal. 95% of participants believe that marijuana should not be classified as a schedule I drug, and the majority of participants agreed that marijuana is less harmful than opioids, tobacco, and alcohol. The most common barrier (38%) to the use of medical marijuana was reported to be a lack of evidence.

Conclusion: More studies into the efficacy of medical marijuana are required before medical marijuana can be recommended to a broader population of patients. A key component to clinical trials is the funding. Changing the classification of marijuana as a schedule I drug will allow greater resources for clinical trials.