



ACUPUNCTURE & ACUPRESSURE

## Recreational Cannabis Use and TCM

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Many people are drawn to cannabis for its effects physically, mentally and emotionally. Medically, cannabis has some legitimate uses, however the scope of this article is limited to the recreational use of cannabis. The following is distilled from a lecture given by Marco Lam of Boulder, Colo.

Cannabis has a lot of side effects and problems with overuse, though most users choose to ignore these problems due to its psychedelic effects. While I am not a fan of the recreational use of any drug, it is not helpful to attack a patient's choice from the get-go, rather, I must create a context for patients on how cannabis impacts their health. To do that, we must go back to the principles of Chinese medicine.

In Chinese medicine, there are the Three Treasures that constitute our life. These are known as *Jing*, *Qi* and *Shen*. The goal of practitioners of the healing arts is to harmonize the Three Treasures. They are generally translated as essence (*Jing*), vitality (*Qi*) and spirit (*Shen*).

Let's take a look at how cannabis affects the elements of the body. Using cannabis takes *Jing* and rapidly turns it into *Qi* and *Shen*, thus you lose a lot of essence over time, since your body is releasing *Jing* faster than the body can assimilate it. This would be similar to going to college with a large trust fund only to overspend it and find yourself penniless after a mere two years into your four-year degree. Over spending your allotted *Jing* makes one understand why people who consume a lot of drugs might look like they are aging faster than is normal.

### Wood Disharmony

Cannabis users are many times the deepest visionaries of society. They want to be in deep alignment with their spirit and shine bright into the world. The liver is the General and Force of Direction. The

impact on liver yang is that in the short term, there is a creativity and expanded visionary process. Longer term, there is a weakened visionary process and inability to take action. When the liver, an emotional organ, gets upset, red eyes, irritability and depression set in. Women have a disruption in menses with worsened PMS symptoms.



#### Fire Ablaze

In Chinese, the word for "heart" (hsin) is also used to denote "mind." The *Shen* resides in the heart, and as one sleeps, blood goes into the heart and calms the *Shen*. Upon awakening, they feel refreshed. When cannabis goes into fire of the heart, it might seem innocuous at first. While awake, sudden flashes of anger arise and paranoia sets in. Without a strong *Shen*, one seems "lost" and sleep becomes restless and disturbed with nightmares and heart palpitations.

#### Earth Scorched

When fire scorches the earth, the yin of earth gets depleted, and the body has similar symptoms of hypoglycaemia; blood sugar drops and the appetite is constantly hungry. If one is not in touch with what nourishes them, then they will eat random things, and might gain weight. Women will be prone to yeast and bladder infections because of the dampness from accumulated sugars eaten.

#### Metal, Too Weak To Cut

Cannabis affects the lungs, skin and immunity. Specific symptomology are: the lungs and skin get dry and there will be deep red-hot pimples on the large intestine meridians on the face (around the mouth) and chest/upper back area surrounding the lungs. There is typically a chronic cough with mucus. Long

term, there might be asthma/eczema or random staph infections. Regular cannabis smokers have respiratory issues such as lung *qi* deficiency with a heat (sometimes producing little yellow phlegm nuggets in the mornings).

### Water Depleted

By tapping into the water of the kidneys, the *Jing* is depleted. There is fire from the heart meridian and vision from the liver, but not enough energy to produce a result. Long-term users might suffer from lower back achiness, which is a sign that reserves are being tapped heavily. The continuous depletion of the *Jing* and kidney energy diminishes sex-drive in both men and women. In some cases of over consumption, erectile dysfunction (ED) has been noted in men as early as their twenties.

Cialis - best resana to treat the disease with a great name for Erectile Dysfunction. It creates psychological problems insideworsening nervous condition and internal imbalances. Problem with potatoe can often be a cause of erectile dysfunction. Cialisnot only treats erectile dysfunction but also cures prostate problems. Why is it so often in the US people are searching for how to [buy Cialis](#)? AsCialis is the market leader and has long surpassed such a drug as Viagra. What are the advantages Cialis before Viagra. Salesrelated 36 hoursand viagra 7 hours. Also Cialis can be taken in conjunction with alcohol and regardless of the meal. With minimal side effects.

Lastly, vaporizers are gaining much momentum, but are just as bad as it takes *Jing* and uses it the same way that regular cannabis smoke does.

### Other Issues

Cannabis has a cooling effect over time; it stimulates the liver yang in the beginning, but it depletes it in the long run, so the net effect is cooling, which the body counteracts by producing heat. Thus, women who overuse cannabis might find themselves suffering from hot flashes, similar to that of a pre-menopausal woman. A combination of birth control pills and cannabis has created one of the worst female reproductive health issues of all time with a surge of ovarian cysts, fibroids and dysmenorrhea. Additionally, as stated above, the continuous depletion of the *Jing*, or kidney energy, diminishes sex-drive.

If you find yourself attracting a lot of patients who regularly use cannabis, whether inhaled or eaten, you might have a gift for attracting people who are seeking enlightenment and transformation. Cannabis use, especially when used recreationally, can lead directly to that feeling of going inward to seek enlightenment and opening up channels of creativity. Many are addicted to this feeling, and therefore continue to use it, despite the fact that the enlightenment that they felt was only fleetingly attainable, but not sustainable. In order to attain the enlightenment that we seek, we must integrate and assimilate the information more than once to be able to transform, not just access it once or twice artificially.

When at the peak of health, many have experienced "highs" practicing yoga, tai qi and meditation, leading to longer-lasting positive insights and energy. In fact, the goal of Transcendental Meditation is enlightenment. The difference between these natural ways to seek enlightenment and recreational drug use is that the latter is the lazy way to find enlightenment because no work was involved, along with the negative side effects from the body trying to re-balance.

I was recently told by a patient, "If I don't smoke weed, then I can't shut off my brain. I do calculus

problems as I'm trying to sleep, and I never get any rest!" This reminds me of all the genius peers I saw from middle school to college who smoked in order to get some peace of mind. The woman above is a chemical engineering student and mother of three. She was forced to stop smoking when she got pregnant with her third child, and came to me for a cure to stop smoking for the sake of her baby. She was a patient even before getting pregnant. I would watch with interest as she would tell me a story, but as the ending got near, her temper would flare: she would raise her voice (volume, tempo and pitch), as she couldn't control her emotions since her liver fire was out of control. Sometimes she would end shaking and crying, only to move on to another subject almost immediately. As was normal, she would have a reddish hue on her cheeks, and red-hot pimples around her mouth in the large intestine region. I knew she was a regular cannabis user even before she told me.

For herbs, I recommend formulas to calm the *Shen* or one to raise GABA. GABA is the neurotransmitter in the brain that inhibits panic and anxiety (and quiets the brain). Modern day stress has - for many people - causes a deficiency in GABA. Most people do not get better simply by taking GABA which is available over the counter at most health food stores. Formulas with Magnesium, L-Taurine, Valerian and Lithium, will calm the nervous system. As with the patient above, when I gave her a formula to naturally induce her own stores of GABA, she was helped tremendously. As her body was detoxing from cannabis, she would sporadically experience extremely calm moments similar to feeling "stoned." I have also given these formulas to patients with diagnosed bipolar disorder during their manic phases and patients with extreme anxiety, which also causes a similar feeling that the brain is over-stimulated and cannot power off.

### Recovering from Each Cannabis Session

For all the creative vision cannabis provides, it uses a tremendous amount of resources. We must guard the *Jing* like the treasure that it is. Encourage your patients to have awareness and consciousness around the usage in order to know how many resources it consumes. It seems innocuous at first, but it takes a toll, and it's a heavy price to pay. Depending on frequency of consumption, reducing or eliminating cannabis will yield similar results to any type of detox, such as cravings and irritability. Therefore, it is best to help your patients find a ritual during the transition process. For patients that refuse to quit smoking, herbal remedies such as Sha Shen Mai Men Dong will help to protect their yin and kidney organs.

### Bedside Manner

Understanding the psychological reasons why someone would want to use cannabis will go a long way in gaining compassion for the patient. There is no harm in kindly asking a patient if the price is worth paying. If the patient feels it is part of their journey, then work with the patient on how to respect the herb (rather than abuse it). Ask instead how to evolve and appreciate the herb for deeper growth.

The goal is to create an environment of supporting the righteous *qi*, or *zheng qi*. Ask them why they are trying to self-medicate and what they are trying to escape or accomplish. The answer might be a little distorted when they're using drugs. Our struggle as practitioners is trying to figure out how to speak to the being inside of them that wants to get better. After all, it might seem odd (or even wrong) to many people that we choose to use ancient Chinese herbal formulas or homeopathy rather than Western medicine, but it is our right to do so, even if some do not agree with it.

