

Daily Camera

Guest opinion: Pot has become a hard drug

By Jennifer Cunningham | Boulder Daily Camera

February 19, 2021 | <https://www.dailycamera.com/2021/02/19/guest-opinion-jennifer-cunningham-pot-has-become-a-hard-drug/>

Don't know where your creme brûlée torch is? Ask your kids.

Don't know what Shatter is? Ask your kids.

Have you heard of dabbing? No, it is not a dance.

If you don't have kids, I'll fill you in. Shatter is up to 90% tetrahydrocannabinol sold at pot shops. You use a butane torch to turn it into a waxy substance to “dab” it. You can also buy “flower or bud” at levels over 30%.

Anything above 15% THC is considered a hard drug that can cause psychosis, including suicidal ideation and hallucinations in all ages, including those with no history of behavioral illness.

Surprised? The marijuana our kids have access to is not what was accessible before legalization. Prior to 2000, THC levels were around 4 to 5%. When pot was legalized in 2012, it was at about 10% THC.

Research out of the Netherlands — land of the red light district, chocolates, legalized drugs and progressive rehabilitation programs — concludes pot above 15% THC should be labeled a hard drug and is associated with an increase in admissions to drug treatment centers.

Drug abuse harms behavioral health, regardless of age or mental health strength. In a 2015 Lancet Psychiatry study, 18- to 65-year-olds who used THC above 15% were three times more likely to suffer from their first psychotic episode. Those who smoked at these levels daily were five times as likely. It is the No. 1 substance found in adolescents who have died by suicide.

Colorado voters passed a marijuana law that did not anticipate pot morphing into a hard drug, unregulated THC potency and home delivery programs. Medical cards are handed out to 18- to 20-year-olds resulting in a resell channel to the junior and high school crowd, putting the medical community's legitimacy in question. And when kids become addicted, develop a mental illness or cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome, the cannabis industry blames the parents.

Don't be duped. The cannabis business wants you to believe all THC concentration levels are safe. They don't care about us, our mental health or creating substance abuse programs and inpatient treatment centers for those who become sick.

They are concerned with revenues. This situation is reminiscent of tobacco companies lobbying for cigarettes and their safety. Check out the satirical movie "Thank You for Smoking" ([youtube.com/watch?v=s3eeTjKocZY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3eeTjKocZY)) for reference.

The idea that all marijuana products are harmless is naive. Research is catching up; parents need to know the truth and take a stand. Instead of protecting kids, we've made a challenging world harder to navigate.

Contact your state representative and tell them you back legislation that limits high potency THC and puts children first, not the cannabis industry.

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