



Medical Marijuana

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Name:

Stephen Abrams, PhD

Title:

Former Psychologist

Position:

Not Clearly Pro or Con to the question "*Should marijuana be a medical option?*"

Reasoning:

"At present it is not known for certain whether cannabis is dangerous. But this does not justify the view that it is perfectly safe and should be made freely available to everyone. It is an established principle of pharmacology that a drug should not be made generally available until its safety has been established by means of controlled clinical trials. Here lies the great difficulty in the present situation. For various reasons it has not been possible to obtain the scientific information that is necessary to make a fair assessment of the social and medical problem of cannabis. There are few experimenters who would be prepared to risk working in such a controversial field. Furthermore, the drug has been removed from the Pharmacopoeia, and is virtually unavailable for research purposes. To be in possession of cannabis or to import it, one must hold a license issued by the Home Secretary. Given such a license, one would find that international controls make the purchase of cannabis difficult. For such reasons, the average number of scientific papers published annually on the subject of cannabis has recently been about four or five, and these have been mainly chemical studies. Those who have a legitimate right and a scientific reason to possess cannabis find that they cannot obtain it, but their students have no difficulty in purchasing it for the purpose of 'getting stoned'. One could, of course, take the risk of performing research with illegally bought supplies; and I am informed by the editor of one of the British Psychological Society journals that his fellow editors would probably consider publishing research on cannabis on its scientific merit and without reference to the source of supply. But in such a case the investigator would risk prosecution and dismissal from his job. It is to be hoped that the Home Office will recognize that the present situation is intolerable, and that they will make cannabis seized at the customs available to legitimate research workers."

"The Oxford Scene and the Law," *The Book of Grass*, 1967

Theoretical Expertise Ranking: ★★☆☆ Experts

PhD's and JD's (lawyers) with significant post-doctoral involvement in medical marijuana issues; judges who have presided over medical marijuana cases. *[Note: Experts definition varies by site.]*

Involvement and Affiliations:

- Head, Society for Mental Awareness (SOMA) Research Association, 1967-1970
- Joint Managing Director, Avalon Botanicals, 1967-1970
- President, Parapsychology Laboratory, University of Chicago, 1957-1960
- Former Charter Associate, Parapsychological Association
- Former Visiting Research Fellow, Parapsychology Laboratory, Duke University
- Former Director, Parapsychology Laboratory, Oxford University

Education:

- PhD, Psychology, St. Catherine's College, Oxford University, 1967
- BS, Psychology, University of Chicago, 1960

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Website: None found

Select Publications:

- "Soma, the Wootton Report and Cannabis Law Reform in Britain During the 1960s and 1970s," *A Cannabis Reader: Global Issues and Local Experiences*, European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction website, 2008
- "The Wootton Report: The Decriminalisation of Cannabis in Britain," www.drugtext.org, 1997
- "Hashish Fudge: Soma and the Wootton Report," www.druglibrary.org, 1993
- "Utopiates and Public Policy," *Research on Psychotropic Drugs*, 1968
- "The Oxford Scene and the Law," *The Book of Grass*, 1967
- "Extrasensory Behavior," *Oxford Parapsychological Association*, 1964

Other:

- Wrote the first cannabis law reform advertisement, sponsored by the Beatles, for *The Times* of London in 1967.
- Born on July 15, 1938 in Chicago, Illinois, and has been a long-time resident of the United Kingdom.



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