

## Marijuana Works As a Treatment for Glaucoma, But...

Let's get this out of the way.

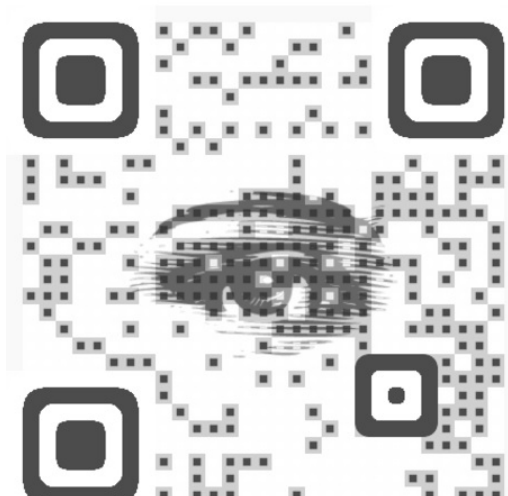
Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinoid, the active compound in marijuana, reduces the production of fluid within the eye (known as the aqueous fluid).<sup>[1]</sup> The problem, however, is that it only works for a few hours during the time someone is "high"<sup>[2]</sup>. Among those people I know who enjoy the feeling of being "high" I doubt any of them would want to spend every waking hour of their lives in that state of mind. Even if they did want such a thing it just wouldn't be practical.

There is also the challenge of standardizing marijuana treatment. Different strains of marijuana vary in their concentration of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinoid. Additionally, smoking a joint or taking a hit from a bong does not produce a "metered dose" or consistent amount of the active ingredient. Finally, smoking any plant-based material can destroy lung tissue and increase the risk of developing (and dying from) lung cancer.

So, does **marijuana** work to lower the IOP? Yes. Is it a practical **treatment option**? No.

### References:

1. Porcella A, Maxia C, Gessa GL, Pani L. The human eye expresses high levels of CB1 cannabinoid receptor mRNA and protein. *Eur J Neurosci* 2000;12:1123-7.
2. Flach AJ. Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in the treatment of end-stage open-angle glaucoma. *Trans Am Ophthalmol Soc* 2002;100:215-22.
3. Green K. Marijuana smoking vs cannabinoids for glaucoma therapy. *Arch Ophthalmol* 1998;116:1433-7.



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