Is Smoking Weed No Riskier Than Drinking Alcohol?

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President Barack Obama took the public debate about marijuana legalization to new highs. In an interview with The New Yorker magazine, the president not only reminded folks that his childhood use of the drug has been documented but also said he believes smoking pot is no more risky than drinking alcohol, CNN.com reported.

So, what's the truth behind President Obama's statement? Below, we review the CNN comparison of the facts, risks and stats for both substances.

Addictive qualities. Alcohol wins by a long shot. Studies show that approximately 17.6 million people, or one in 12 adults, suffer from alcohol abuse or dependence in the United States. For marijuana, the National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates that only 9 percent of pot smokers will become addicted.

Driving under the influence. It's a draw between alcohol and marijuana. Every hour, one person dies and 20 people are injured in car crashes involving a drunk driver. What's more, studies show even only slightly "buzzed" drivers—those with a blood alcohol level of .01 percent, or the equivalent one drink—are 46 percent more likely to get into a car crash than a sober driver. Studies about the effect of marijuana on drivers aren't plentiful, but a recent report found that people who smoked pot within three hours of driving were also nearly twice as likely to cause a crash.

Nutritional effects. Alcohol and marijuana have the potential to wreak havoc on a healthy diet. One shot of liquor contains about 100 calories, and for beer, it's around 150. Plus, alcohol lowers your inhibitions, making it more likely for you to pig out on pizza or nachos late at night. And it's well-known that marijuana gives you the munchies. But, interestingly enough, studies show pot smokers tend to be skinnier than those who don't smoke.

Sexual health. Studies show drinking leads to risky sexual behavior that can increase your likelihood of acquiring sexually transmitted infections or facing an unplanned pregnancy. What's more, drinking alcohol makes you dehydrated. This makes it more difficult for men to get erections and for women to enjoy their own natural lubrication. In addition, marijuana causes men to find

sex less pleasurable, as well as creates more erectile dysfunction problems for them.

Long-term health effects. Best leave the booze and weed alone, folks. Drinking causes liver disease, neurological problems and psychiatric issues and can increase your risk of certain cancers. And smoking marijuana is actually more dangerous than smoking cigarettes. Weed contains a higher concentration of chemicals than tobacco, and it deposits four times the amount of tar in the lungs. In addition, marijuana can cause temporary psychosis in certain people and can trigger schizophrenia in young people with a family history of the mental disorder.

Death risks. MJ is way safer than booze when it comes to direct deaths. Studies show 88,000 Americans die each year as a direct result of excessive alcohol consumption, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. On the other hand, pot smokers would have to consume more than 30 percent of their body weight in the substance at one time to overdose. That's the equivalent of a 160-pound person smoking 48 pounds of marijuana in one sitting, a literally impossible feat.

Recent studies named alcohol the most lethal drug. Click here for more information.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/marijuana-vs-alcohol-safety-25091-4648