AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 501
(A-18)

Introduced by: American Society of Addiction Medicine
Subject: Synthetic Cannabinoids
Referred to: Reference Committee E
(Douglas Martin, MD, Chair)

Whereas, Synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists, such as JWH-018 and HU-210, have recently been gaining popularity as psychoactive substances1; and
Whereas, These synthetic substances are full agonists at cannabinoid receptors, are more potent than delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), and can cause severe illness and even death2; and
Whereas, Synthetic cannabinoid use can lead to physical and psychological dependence, with abrupt cessation of use after long-term use leading to withdrawal-like symptoms, suggesting these substances are addictive3; and
Whereas, Some persons elect to use them since they can be obtained legally in many parts of the United States and are not detected by most standard drug screens, including assays for THC; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association recognize that synthetic cannabinoids such as JWH-018, JWH-210, and other compounds sold by "street" names such as "Spice" and "K2", are potent agonists in the mammalian endocannabinoid system and are dangerous when smoked or consumed (New HOD Policy); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA advocate that the Schedule I status of synthetic cannabinoids under the federal Controlled Substances Act should be retained since these compounds are "drugs with no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse" (New HOD Policy); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA advocate that in any state or other jurisdiction in the U.S. considering changes in the legal status of cannabis, those changes should make explicitly clear that synthetic cannabinoids are unsafe and unfit for human consumption and their possession, use, sale and distribution by persons of all ages should remain illegal. (New HOD Policy)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

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RELEVANTAMA POLICY

Cannabis Legalization for Recreational Use H-95.924
Our AMA: (1) believes that cannabis is a dangerous drug and as such is a serious public health concern; (2) believes that the sale of cannabis for recreational use should not be legalized; (3) discourages cannabis use, especially by persons vulnerable to the drug's effects and in high-risk populations such as youth, pregnant women, and women who are breastfeeding; (3) believes states that have already legalized cannabis (for medical or recreational use or both) should be required to take steps to regulate the product effectively in order to protect public health and safety and that laws and regulations related to legalized cannabis use should consistently be evaluated to determine their effectiveness; (5) encourages local, state, and federal public health agencies to improve surveillance efforts to ensure data is available on the short- and long-term health effects of cannabis use; and (6) supports public health based strategies, rather than incarceration, in the handling of individuals possessing cannabis for personal use.
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