

The ethical issue I am analysing is medicinal use of cannabis in New Zealand. This is an ethical issue because [...]

Two main groups who support legalising cannabis for medical use are [...]

Two main groups who are against legalising cannabis for medical use are the NZ Government and some conservative people in NZ society. The NZ Government believes that the current restrictions and laws are adequate. According to John Key, in response to Helen Kelly's request to ease up on access to medical cannabis, "Prime Minister John Key said he sympathised with Kelly, but the Government was not looking to broaden access to medicinal cannabis" (stuff.co.nz; October 12 2015). He believes that the systems that are in place are working. The Government has the attitude that people can apply for treatment and therefore this retains control of the drug's use in the Minister's hands, which is safer for everyone in NZ. Another group opposed to cannabis use for medicinal purposes are some conservative people/groups in society, such as Family First, however this group acknowledges there are some benefits and more research is needed (Family First website). Other people have firm anti-drug stances and believe that if access is given to medical cannabis, this is the start of a slippery slope to legalisation of cannabis.

1

As stated before, cannabis is illegal in NZ. However, it (sativex) can be accessed for medical use in some cases by seeking approval from the Government. This is a difficult process however. I will explain implications of this situation at societal, interpersonal and personal levels.

Implications for the well-being of society include that policing and legal systems could spend time and resources on prosecutions, court cases and fines for otherwise law-abiding citizens who access cannabis/marijuana for medical reasons. This means that valuable resources are taken away from other issues that need attention. In terms of healthcare, the lack of access to cannabis for medical purposes means that more expensive drugs are needed and more hospital time is needed – this also costs the taxpayer more money (NORML website). This may also have impacts for the Government, if they are going against popular opinion of society.

2

For individuals indirectly affected (family, friends, doctors - interpersonal) [...]

For individuals directly affected by the issue (personal) [...]