

California study confirms pot's medicinal value

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

University of California medical researchers slipped an ingredient in chili peppers beneath the skin of marijuana smokers to see if pot could relieve acute pain. It could – at certain doses.

They monitored patients with AIDS and HIV as they toked on joints or placebos to determine whether marijuana could quell agonizing pain from nerve damage. It provided relief.

They tested a “Volcano Vaporizer” to see whether inhaling smokeless pot delivered healthier, low-tar cannabis. It did.

Over a dozen years, California's historic experiment in medical marijuana research brought new science to the debate on marijuana's place in medicine. State-funded studies – costing \$8.7 million – found pot may offer broad benefits for pain from nerve damage from injuries, HIV, strokes and other conditions.

California's famed Center for Medicinal Cannabis Research – established by the Legislature to answer the question, “Does marijuana have therapeutic value?” – has now all but completed America's most comprehensive studies into the efficacy of pot.

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