Good sense is defeated by political posturing

The benefits of cannabis in the management of chronic pain are well attested, and it should be available on prescription to people who need it. The only reason it is not is because politicians are frightened of appearing soft on drugs. This political posturing makes it impossible to implement sensible policies on drug use or to invest properly in rehabilitation programmes. It also makes it impossible to distinguish properly between different kinds of drug use. An older person in chronic pain taking cannabis orally on prescription would be very different from the homeless young heroin addict.

New Labour is so frightened of losing the Daily Mail vote that it takes authoritarian positions on anything and everything under the sun.

Brendan McMahon is a clinical nurse specialist in Derbyshire

Cannabis should not be used in its current form

BMA research has shown that ‘crude cannabis is unsuitable for medical use because it contains toxic components that are harmful to human health’. Besides, users smoke it with tobacco, which is hardly therapeutic. Tobacco produces more harmful toxins than just about any other substance that does not actually kill you.

The BMA also said: ‘The potential for cannabis-based medicines to offer effective pain relief cannot be overlooked and the BMA would like to see more research in this area.’

Both these statements will have swayed the judges. But the fact that the judges gave leave for appeal...