

## With 60 tonnes of khat imported to the UK each week, a chemist at the University of Birmingham makes the case for better scientific literacy of the now banned herbal stimulant.

Dr Simon Cotton

"The home secretary, Theresa May's decision to reject the advice of her scientific advisers and ban Khat has caused something of a controversy. Her main justification was the fear that Britain could become a regional trafficking hub for the substance, which is outlawed in the majority of other northern European countries."

[Read full opinion \(/research/impact/perspective/khat-simon-cotton.aspx\)](/research/impact/perspective/khat-simon-cotton.aspx)

You can listen to Dr Simon Cotton's podcast about the subject of Khat on our [Soundcloud channel \(https://soundcloud.com/unibirmingham/khat-podcast\)](https://soundcloud.com/unibirmingham/khat-podcast). Full transcript available on the [Chemistry World website \(http://www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/2013/05/cathinone-khat-methedrone-methcathinone-podcast\)](http://www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/2013/05/cathinone-khat-methedrone-methcathinone-podcast).

### Have your say

This debate has now closed.

#### Feedback

on 17 July 2013, **Hasan Hilaaly** wrote

This is starting to sound like a broken record, arguing about the harms of khat blah blah.

If the UK government is genuinely worried about the harms of a substance then they should BE FAIR and also ban Alcohol and tobacco!!!!

There is a mountain of evidence that these two are massive killers and they cost the border agency millions each year due to people trying to smuggle them into the UK from abroad.

These are the same reasons that the home secretary is using to ban khat only many times worse - if she cant/wont ban alcohol and tobacco then the only conclusion that you can come out with is that we are a minority and our customs/lifestyle/votes etc. dont count. period!

I challenge anyone leaving a comment here to tell me that khat is more harmful then these two. Any takers?

[Report this comment \(/webteam/bigdebate/ReportCommentsForm.aspx?commentID=4.&commentUsername=HasanHilaaly&commentPageURL=/research/impact/perspective/khat.aspx\)](/webteam/bigdebate/ReportCommentsForm.aspx?commentID=4.&commentUsername=HasanHilaaly&commentPageURL=/research/impact/perspective/khat.aspx)

on 17 July 2013, **Yusef** wrote

Firstly in reference to the opinions and views of Ali/Mohamed. You talk about khat being a cost to the economy where in fact it contributes tens of millions of pounds. Not to belittle anyone..but the facts speak for themselves there is NO EVIDENCE as suggested by fully qualified scientists that khat has the effects in which you have both noted on comments. Although your opinions are welcome, please do not state facts when in fact there is no evidence to support them.

Dr Simon, this is a fascinating article on the chemical breakdown of khat. Theresa may has disregarded scientific advice against banning khat. Khat has been chewed here in the UK for decades and has played its part in social meetings and gatherings of families and the youth. It is also used in celebratory occasions such as eid and weddings. Banning khat will only lead to segregation within arab communities. What is your view on Theresa May's announcement to ban khat with no foundations or argument to do so?

[Report this comment \(/webteam/bigdebate/ReportCommentsForm.aspx?commentID=3.&commentUsername=Yusef&commentPageURL=/research/impact/perspective/khat.aspx\)](/webteam/bigdebate/ReportCommentsForm.aspx?commentID=3.&commentUsername=Yusef&commentPageURL=/research/impact/perspective/khat.aspx)

on 16 July 2013, **Ali M. Farah** wrote

I would like to give a first hand experience of this substance to the proponents of Khat. Of course any meaningful discussion of substance's degree of harm it causes should in my view originate from those who are exposed to the substance. Furthermore, we have seen hundreds of so called academics who jump on the wagon just to show off or impress others about what they think they know about the subject.

Khat is highly addictive drug which inflicts serious damage on nervous system, digestive system, reproductive system to mention a few. It reduces the addict lazy who cannot assume any responsibility. It destroys the society from its base as it breaks down families and makes children circumstantial orphans.

There is no doubt it costs millions of pounds for UK tax payers to treat the damages of Khat which is a reasonable motivation for the Homeoffice secretary to ban it.

There has been vast amount of study and research conducted in the countries where Khat is popular. They all without exception indicate that Khat is a strong dangerous drug.

I would like to conclude by saying the home-office's decision to ban khat was probably the best decision so far this parliament term.

PM on 10 July 2013, **Mohamed husein** wrote

When you look at the psychological impact of Qat it's has major problems For the long time users.most of the researches about this subject are not wide scale project and unreliable. Social and economical problems are huge as this stimulus leaves needs 6 hours of sitting per day .

[Report this comment \(/webteam/bigdebate/ReportCommentsForm.aspx?commentID=1. &commentUsername=Mohamed husein&commentPageURL=/research/impact/perspective/khat.aspx\)](#)

