



Legislative Breakfast 2017

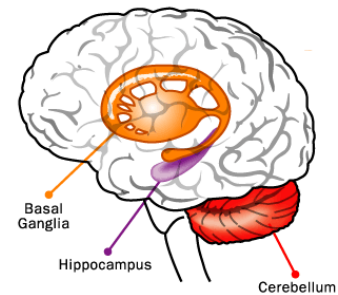
December 18, 2017
9:30 AM to 11:30 AM
Jewish Community Center
1035 Newfield Ave., Stamford, CT 06905

TOPIC: MARIJUANA

PROBLEM

"A child who gets through age 21 without smoking, using illegal drugs or abusing alcohol is virtually certain never to do so." (National Institute of Health)

Cannabinoid Receptor Sites



The National Institutes of Health in 2016 noted findings that were consistent with their previous research results; new data showed again that:

- Marijuana use disorder is about twice as common among men than women
- Younger age groups are way more likely to experience the disorder than people over 45
- The onset-risk for the disorder peaked during late adolescence and in the early 20s
- There is a strong association shown between past-year and lifetime marijuana use disorders with other substance use and mental health disorders (co-occurring problems).
- Marijuana and alcohol are frequently used together; studies suggest a need for more research in order to understand the effects of combined use; it appears that people who use marijuana and alcohol together are more heavily impacted than if they used either substance alone. This is likely due to the fact that alcohol appears to increase the absorption of THC, the agent in marijuana that has the desired psychoactive properties, thus giving the user their high.

Marijuana Impact on Youths (American College of Pediatricians, 2017, CDC, Et Al):

- Marijuana use by adolescents progresses at a steady pace; as more states decriminalize it its use has increased.
- Use of marijuana during adolescence is linked to an increased risk of a co-occurring mental illness. (Cerda, 2012)

- Evidence-based research studies are indicating that the current limited legalization of marijuana has already increased the rates of unintended marijuana exposure among young children, and may increase adolescent use.
- A national study of 6,116 high school seniors found that 10% of non-users said they would try marijuana if it were legal in their state. Of noteworthy emphasis is that this included large numbers of students who would have rated as at low-risk for experimentation; non-cigarette smokers, youngsters with solid religious affiliation, and those with peers who were opposed to drug use.
- Marijuana may be a gateway drug for some youths. (NIDA, 2017)
- Among high school seniors who were currently using marijuana, 18% said they would use more of it if it was legalized.
- According to CDC data, more teens now smoke marijuana than cigarettes.
- Use of marijuana has shown correlation to lower school grades and a reduced chance of graduation. (McLeod, J. 2004).
- Adolescent-onset use of marijuana is associated with a significant and permanent decrease in IQ. (Meier, H. 2012).
- Research has shown that marijuana's negative effects on attention, memory, and learning can last for days or weeks after the acute effects of the drug wear off.³
- Persistent use of marijuana before the age of 18 can lead to lasting mental deficits in attention and memory. (Gururajan A, 2012).
- Contrary to the belief that marijuana is not addictive, marijuana use can lead to physical and social dependence.(NDSU, 2015)
- Marijuana smoke has been shown to have 50% more carcinogens than tobacco smoke. (NIAAA, 2016)

Recreational Marijuana:

Recreational marijuana is now being considered for legalization in Connecticut. It is enticing as the CT Office of Fiscal Analysis estimates that the legalization and taxation of pot could bring in more than \$30.1 million using the Massachusetts model and \$63.9 million using the Colorado model during the first year it is implemented, but associated administrative costs

of running such a program would cost \$4.2 million under the Massachusetts model and \$9 million under the Colorado model.

Smoking Marijuana Can Make Driving Dangerous:

THC, the main psychoactive chemical in marijuana, affects the cerebellum's function and impairs our abilities to do the simple tasks that are involved in driving a car. The cerebellum, the part of our brains that controls balance and coordination, is what is impacted by THC. It also affects the basal ganglia, which is the part of the brain that is involved in movement control. These effects lead to impaired judgment and coordination, slowed reaction times (e.g., hitting the brake in time), and problems reacting to signals or sounds, both of which are vitally important when driving. Source: NIDA- National Institute on Drug Abuse

The Brain Changes with Drug Use:

Prolonged drug use changes the brain in fundamental and enduring ways. These long-lasting changes are a major component of the addiction process itself. Drug use creates a metaphorical "switch" in the brain that "flips" at some point during an individual's drug use. The point at which this "flip" occurs varies from individual to individual, but the effect of this change is the transformation of a drug abuser to a drug addict. Source: NIDA: NIDA for Teens- National Institute on Drug Abuse

Drug-Use Effects on Learning and Memory:

The hippocampus is an area of the brain that serves a large role in learning and memory. It also has a high concentration of cannabinoid receptors. As a result, smoking marijuana causes short term memory loss; for those who use marijuana while their brain is still in development (before the mid-20's), it can lead to a drop in IQ and substantial problems with both long and short term memory. Source: NIDA: NIDA for Teens- National Institute on Drug Abuse

OUR QUESTION TO YOU:

- 1. Would you discuss your position on Recreational marijuana, which is still being considered in Connecticut, weighing both the deleterious effects on young people and their developing minds, the documented increase in use by young people when access is expanded, and the positive impact legalizing it can have on the State budget.**

Doing so is enticing in terms of balancing a budget as the CT Office of Fiscal Analysis estimates that the legalization and taxation of pot could bring in more than \$30.1 million using the Massachusetts model 63.9 using the Colorado model during the first year it is implemented, but associated administrative costs of running such a program would be \$4.2 million under the Massachusetts model and \$9 million under the Colorado model

RESOURCES/REFERENCES:

Cerda M, Wall M, Keyes KM, Galea S, Hasin D. (2012). "Medical marijuana laws in 50 states: Investigating the relationship between state legalization of medical marijuana and marijuana use, abuse and dependence" *Drug Alcohol Depend.* 2012 Jan 1;120(1-3):22-7

Gururajan A, et al. (2012). *Aust N Z J Psychiatry.* 2012/46: Chapter 3. Drugs of abuse and increased risk of psychosis development. In Meier MH, et al. North Dakota State University. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA.* 2012; 109: E2657-64.

Gururajan A, et al. (2012). *Aust N Z J Psychiatry.* 2012/46: Chapter 4. Myths and Facts about Marijuana. In Meier MH, et al. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA.* North Dakota State University.

Meier, M., Caspi, A., Ambler, A, Harrington, H. et al. (2012, Oct. 2). Persistent cannabis . *Proceedings of the Natl. Acad. Sci. US Nat'l Library of Science.* U S A. 109(40):E2657-64. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1206820109. Epub 2012 Aug 27.

Macleod, J. Oakes,R., Copello,E. et al, (2004, May 15). Psychological and social sequelae of cannabis and other illicit drug use by young people: a systematic review of longitudinal, general population studies. *THE LANCET.* Vol 363. www.thelancet.com

NDSU (na) (2015, Apr. 21). Marijuana Myths & Facts. North Dakota State University. Retrieved from https://www.ndsu.edu/alcoholinfo/students/marijuana_myths_facts/

NIDA. (2017, December 12). Marijuana. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana> on 2017, December 12

NIAAA Press Office (na).(2016, Mar 4). Marijuana use disorder is common and often untreated. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) Retrieved from <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>