MARIJUANA AND LIFE OUTCOMES

Heavy use of marijuana can have long-term consequences on life. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) reports that heavy marijuana smokers suffered damage to social life, education, employment and careers as well as physical damages to their brains and bodies.¹

Health Outcomes¹

- Marijuana affects youth brain development. Its effects on thinking/memory can cause long-term consequences.
- People who begin smoking marijuana heavily in their teens and continue into adulthood lose an average of 8 IQ points.
- Frequent marijuana smokers can have similar respiratory problems as tobacco smokers, such as daily cough and phlegm production, more frequent acute chest illness, and a heightened risk of lung infections.
- Chronic marijuana use is associated with mental illness, and can produce a temporary psychotic reaction, later development of psychosis and can worsen the course of illness in patients with schizophrenia.
- Other mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts among adolescents, and personality disturbances, including a lack of motivation to engage in typically rewarding activities have been associated with marijuana use.
**Social Outcomes**

A longitudinal study conducted in New Zealand\(^2\) examined what impact early marijuana use had on their cohort’s lives by age 25. Researchers looked at associations between the extent of marijuana use during adolescence and young adulthood and later education, economic, employment, relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction outcomes. Here is what the study found:

- Almost 40% of youth who never used marijuana earned a college degree by age 25. The percent completing college dropped off rapidly as the amount of marijuana use increased. Almost none of the youth who used marijuana more than once per week had completed a college degree by age 25.

- For youth, ages 21-25, using marijuana more than once per week, the unemployment rate was 50% as compared to 20% of those who never used marijuana.

- Researchers also found that income, romantic relationship quality, and life satisfaction showed similar patterns. Increased marijuana use was associated with lower income, lower relationship quality and lower life satisfaction.

Research has shown that marijuana has negative effects on attention, memory, and learning.\(^3\) Several studies have also linked heavy marijuana use to greater welfare dependence and criminal behavior.\(^2,4\) There has also been associations made between marijuana use and adverse consequences in the workplace, such as increased risk for injury or accidents.\(^5\)

**WHAT GEORGIANS SHOULD KNOW:**

1) Marijuana users themselves report a perceived influence of their marijuana use on poor outcomes on a variety of life satisfaction and achievement measures.

2) Heavy marijuana use by teens is linked to lower satisfaction with life, more likely to earn a lower income and more likely to be unemployed.\(^6\)

**TO LEARN MORE VISIT:**

http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana


