Marijuana, Mental Health and Mental Illness

There have been a number of studies that have explored the link between marijuana use and mental health symptoms. Findings in these studies have connected chronic marijuana use and mental illness. In sufficient doses, marijuana can cause psychosis, a state of mind characterized by the inability to distinguish between what is real and what is not.\(^1\)

Marijuana may also contribute to the development of life long psychotic disorders.\(^2\)

Epidemiological studies have shown that as the frequency of marijuana abuse increases, so does the risk for a psychotic disorder such as schizophrenia.\(^3\)

- High doses of marijuana can produce a temporary psychotic reaction which involve hallucinations and paranoia in some users.\(^4\)

- Using marijuana can worsen the course of illness in patients with schizophrenia.\(^4\)

- Studies following users across time showed a link between regular marijuana use and later development of psychosis. This relationship was influenced by genetic variables as well as the amount of drug used, drug potency, and the age at which it was first taken (those who start young are at increased risk for later problems).\(^4\)

- One in seven marijuana users reported experiencing mental health problems such as “strange, unpleasant experiences such as hearing voices” or “becoming convinced that someone is trying to harm you” after using marijuana.\(^5\)

Smoking Marijuana and Depression and Anxiety

Associations have also been found between marijuana use and other mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts among adolescents, a lack of motivation to engage in typically rewarding activities and personality disturbances.\(^1,4\) Those who use marijuana have been shown to have higher levels of depression and depressive symptoms than those who do not use marijuana.
According to an analysis of recent data by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP):

- Weekly or more frequent use of marijuana doubles a teen’s risk of depression and anxiety.
- Depressed teens are more than twice as likely as their peers to abuse or become dependent on marijuana.
- Teens who smoke marijuana at least once a month are three times more likely to have suicidal thoughts than non-users.
- Teen girls who use marijuana daily are more likely to develop depression than girls who do not use marijuana.

WHAT GEORGIANS SHOULD KNOW:

1) Young people who use marijuana weekly have double the risk of depression.

2) Teens who smoke marijuana at least once a month are three times more likely than non-users to have suicidal thoughts.

3) Those who have tried marijuana by age 18 were 2.4 times more likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia than those who had not tried marijuana. The risk increases with the frequency of use.

4) Regular marijuana use increases the risk of developing mental disorders by 40%.

TO LEARN MORE VISIT:

http://clearga.org/marijuana-and-mental-health


