

THE FACTS

About Drug Abuse

1st Quarter 2010

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New Study Suggests Marijuana Damages Teens Brains More Than Suspected

As a follow up to the Marijuana study highlighted in our 2nd Quarter 2009 Newsletter, the following information was recently released:

"The effects of daily cannabis use on teenage brains is worse than originally thought and the long-term effects appear to be irreversible, new research from McGill University suggests.

The study, by Dr. Gabriella Gobbi, a psychiatric researcher from the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre, suggests that daily cannabis consumption can lead to depression and anxiety.

The new study, published in *Neurobiology of Disease*, suggests that the reputed "soft" drug has an impact on serotonin and norepinephrine, compounds which help control mood and anxiety.

"These permanent changes in the brain are also linked to certain mental illnesses, like schizophrenia," Gobbi said in an interview Thursday.

"And we showed that even if we stopped the cannabis use at the end of adolescence, the changes were still detectable in adulthood."

While past epidemiological studies have shown how cannabis consumption can affect behavior in some teenagers, Gobbi said the new study demonstrates that the effects are more devastating in teens compared to adults.

"Our study is one of the first to focus on the neurobiological mechanisms at the root of this influence of cannabis on depression and anxiety in adolescents," she said.



Gobbi says the study reveals that because serotonin and norepinephrine systems are still in development during adolescence, cannabis interfere with their development.

Gobbi said she will be observing a group of young human marijuana smokers to continue her research."

Link to Article:
www.winnipegfreepress.com/life/health/79569512.html

DRUG STATISTICS

42% of 12-17 year olds can buy marijuana in a day or less; 23% in an hour or less

Almost two-thirds (63%) of high schoolers and 21% of middle schoolers say drugs are used, kept or sold on their school grounds

**2008 CASA Teen Drug Survey*

Notes from Dr. George Elder

Dear Colleagues,

I trust your holidays were filled with family, friends and some well deserved rest and relaxation. A new semester has now begun with new opportunities to prepare, protect and inspire our students. The good news is that we now have the technology and the science to arm our kids as never before to resist that all powerful peer pressure and "say no" to drug use, which they all already know to be dangerous and deadly.

Our young people represent this nation and the world's brightest, most talented and knowledgeable generation yet, thanks in large part to the work you are doing. I see this in school after school as I travel across our great country. Our job, however, is far from over. Why not give your students a gift this New Year? A gift that removes what I believe to be a consistent fear for them: the fear of the weekend. A virtual certainty of detection is the most powerful deterrent available to them when they attend a party or gathering on the weekend where they are almost certain to encounter those using illegal drugs.

The remarkable results we enjoyed in my five years of experience protecting our students through drug testing with hair have been confirmed over and over as I visit and talk with our clients. The great news is that schools, public and private, are joining the fight every day. I want to again thank our current clients for leading the way and invite those considering this important initiative to join us as soon as possible. Our kids are simply too important to delay. I am as close as your phone or email and would welcome the opportunity to visit your school to help you learn more about this life saving and potential preserving science.



Dr. George Elder,
 Vice President, Schools & Colleges

ROXY: The Teen Drug of Choice

"He sits there quietly in a cold sweat. His hands tremble as he fidgets. This 19-year-old bounces his legs as if trying to bounce the pain out of his body. Mark Travis, a husband and father of a 2-year-old, is in withdrawal. He became addicted to Oxycodone. On the street they're known as Roxy's or Blues.

We first met Mark through the proverbial good kid in school, Robert "RJ" Joker. He earned a scholarship to Jacksonville University.

RJ left school and came home to the Bay Area to make a startling discovery. "I started to reconnect with old friends from high school and see what everyone was up to and essentially discovered everyone was on this new drug I've never heard of".

RJ says 12-15 of his friends were hooked on Roxy's. This prescription drug had taken over the lives. He was devastated to see what it was doing to them.

"I've been around friends that are puking, hurling their guts up. They can't talk or get up. Just having conversations with people who just doze out halfway through their sentences".

At the risk of severing relationship, RJ confronted his friends. Mark was one of them who listened. Mark's problem began when he had his wisdom teeth pulled and the doctor prescribed

Vicodin. Mark started abusing those. His prescription ran out, so he went to a friend who could score pain killers.

Mark said, "I asked my friend what kind of pill can you get? The first time I took it, I puked for 2-3 hours and that was only half a pill".

That half of a pill turned into 2-3 pills a day. The next thing he knew, he was popping 10-Roxy's a day at \$10-\$12 a pill. Mark was spending nearly \$2500 a month to support his habit. It was money Mark didn't have. He stole from family, friends, and strangers to get Blues. He was arrested and spent time in the Pinellas County jail.

It's not an uncommon scenario according to Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, Captain Robert Alfonso. He says prescription medication has taken over as the drug of choice, especially by teens. While narcotics officers still see crack, heroin, and marijuana, it pales in comparison to the amount of prescription medication being bought and sold on the streets. He says Roxy's are powerful, immediate and cheap.

"An OxyContin from a pharmacist will run you about 11 dollars. A Roxicodone will run you about a dollar. On the streets Roxy's are running anywhere from 10-30 dollars a pill. So they're making huge amounts of money off this".



Roxicodone Description: The instant release form of Oxycodone which is prescribed for the relief of moderate to severe pain.

Street Names: Roxy's or Blues

Additional Info: Often preferred by users with high tolerances who need the immediate release to even feel an effect, such as long term heroin addicts.

Side Effects: Can impair thinking and the physical abilities required for driving or operating machinery. Is habit forming. Mental and physical dependence can occur. If it is suddenly withdrawn after prolonged use, symptoms of withdrawal may develop. The most frequent side effects include lightheadedness, dizziness, sedation, nausea, vomiting, headache, rash, constipation, dry mouth, and sweating.

Withdrawal Symptoms: May include anxiety, nausea, insomnia, muscle pain, muscle weakness, fevers, and other flu like symptoms.

Link to Article: <http://www.wtsp.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=121866&catid=8>

ASTOUNDING FACTS: Study Finds Link Between Music & Marijuana

Teens who listen to songs about the drug are twice as likely to use it

"Students who listen to music with the most references to marijuana are almost twice as likely to have used the drug than their peers whose musical tastes favor songs less focused on substance use," said University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine researcher Dr. Brian Primack. The researchers analyzed the content of songs that the students reported listening to. The average participant listened to 21.8 hours of music per week and heard about 40 marijuana references in music per day.

* The study was published online by the journal *Addiction*

Teen Drug Use Survey Seen As 'Warning Sign'

"The federal government's annual report of kids' alcohol and drug abuse seems reassuring, but the researchers and public officials who crunch those numbers warned that some of the statistics gleaned from an annual survey of 46,000 American 8th, 10th and 12th graders were worrisome.

Though drug and alcohol use seems to be declining or holding steady, there has been slippage in teen disapproval of such practices and perception of the risks, officials warned.

Take marijuana use, which had declined steadily among teens since the mid-1990s. This year, 19.4% of high school seniors said they had smoked marijuana at some point in the prior 30 days, as did 13.8% of 10th-graders and 5.8% of eighth-graders. The downward trend has stalled in the last two years, and kids' attitudes suggest a reversal may be ahead. In 1991, 58% of eighth-graders said they thought occasional marijuana use was harmful. By last year, that number had fallen to 48%, and this year, to 45%.

In a Washington, D.C., news conference Monday, Gil Kerlikowske, the Obama administration's drug czar, called such numbers "a warning sign."

"When beliefs soften, drug use worsens," said Kerlikowske, whose office is expected to release its first policy initiatives to combat and treat drug abuse in February.

University of Michigan researcher Lloyd Johnston, who oversees the annual survey, said there was "serious softening" in the perceived risks of LSD, inhalants and the party drug Ecstasy -- a sign that "a new generation of kids are interested . . . in rediscovering these drugs, because they don't understand why they shouldn't be using them."

The survey also showed that U.S. adolescents continue to raid their parents' and friends' medicine chests. Use of prescription painkillers is at an all-time high: 10% of high-school seniors reported taking Vicodin for nonmedical reasons in the last year, and 5% reported taking OxyContin.



The officials said that youths report some confidence that prescription drugs are less harmful than street drugs.

In the survey's first accounting of where kids get drugs, it found that 66% who reported illicit drug use said they got the drugs from a friend or relative. Almost 19% said they got drugs with a doctor's prescription."

Link to article: <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-sci-drug-use15-2009dec15,0,4555460.story>

Did You Know ??

Psychemedics was awarded the first CAP accreditation for drug testing with hair.

Psychemedics was awarded this honor by the Commission on Laboratory Accreditation of the College of American Pathologists (CAP), and the results were based on an on-site inspection of its facility. During the CAP accreditation process, inspectors examine the laboratory's records and quality control of procedures for the preceding two years. CAP inspectors also examine the entire staff's qualifications, the laboratory's equipment, facilities, safety program and record, as well as the overall management of the laboratory. This stringent inspection program is designed to specifically ensure the highest standard of care for the laboratory's customers.

* For many years, Psychemedics has also been CAP accredited for urine drug testing.

*Superior Detection
of Drug Abuse*

**PSYCHEMEDICS
CLIENT SERVICES INFO:**

Client Services hours:
6:00 AM—5:30 PM PST
Monday – Friday

5832 Uplander Way
Culver City, CA 90230

Phone: 800.522.7424
Fax: 800.643.2354

GEORGE B. ELDER
Vice President,
Schools and Colleges

Office: (931) 924-3143
Cell: (931) 636-8150
Fax: (931) 924-3133

GeorgeE@psychemedics.com



About Psychemedics:

Psychemedics was established in 1987 to provide testing for drugs of abuse using hair analysis, and has been successfully operating for over 20 years. Thousands of corporations currently rely on Psychemedics' patented hair analysis technology for their pre-employment and employee drug screening. Psychemedics is headquartered in Boston and has offices in Dallas, Chicago, Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Our Laboratory is located in Culver City, CA. Psychemedics is a publicly-held corporation listed on NASDAQ under the ticker symbol PMD.