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Updating you about current events in the battle against addictions

The Marijuana - Mental Health Connection

You might not realize it but marijuana use is associated with a number of mental health conditions including depression, suicidal thoughts and schizophrenia.

Studies show that youth are starting to use marijuana at earlier ages than ever before. Researchers are only beginning to understand the impact of marijuana use during these critical periods of brain development. There is evidence that marijuana use has an impact on the mental health of adolescents. Some examples of the links which have been found between marijuana use and mental health are detailed below.

Depression

Compared to nonusers, youth who report using marijuana at least weekly are twice as likely to report symptoms of depression and anxiety. Teen girls appear to be at particular risk. Daily marijuana use among girls is associated with a 5-fold increase in the risk of developing depression and anxiety. Some depressed teens may in fact be self medicating with marijuana in an effort to alleviate depressed feelings. Unfortunately, marijuana use can actually worsen symptoms of depression and lead to other serious mental health conditions.

Suicidal Thoughts

Marijuana use has also been linked to suicidal thoughts. Data from the National Survey on Drug Abuse found that teens between the ages of 12 and 17 who use marijuana weekly are three times more likely to report thoughts of committing suicide.

Schizophrenia

Several studies have identified a marijuana use as an independent risk factor for schizophrenia. Individuals who report heavy marijuana use at age 18 are at six times greater risk of developing schizophrenia later in life. Other studies have shown that early use of marijuana (age 15 vs age 18) is associated with an even greater risk. Although marijuana use can increase the risk of schizophrenia in any individual, the risk of marijuana induced psychosis is even higher among those with a personal or family history.

Remember teens who learn about the risks from their parents are less likely to use marijuana and other drugs.

Source: http://www.theantidrug.com/drug_info/marijuana-mental-health-connection.asp
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