

Category: of
aggressive behavior,
compared 17 long-
term heavy



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Category: Social Issues Paper Title: Text: I.

Marijuana causes behavioral changes. A. Chronic Marijuana users become more aggressive during withdrawal. People who have smoked marijuana daily for many years display more aggressive behavior when they stop smoking the drug, according to a new study by researchers at Harvard Medical School. The study, funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institutes of Health, is further evidence that a withdrawal syndrome is associated with abstinence from long-term marijuana use, and suggests that aggressive behavior is part of this syndrome. Human and animal studies conducted since the early 1970's have suggested the existence of a marijuana withdrawal syndrome, characterized by insomnia, restlessness, loss of appetite, and irritability. " This syndrome—although less dramatic than the withdrawal syndrome associated with alcohol, opiate, or cocaine withdrawal—may contribute to relapse among those dependent on marijuana," says NIDA Director Dr.

Alan I. Leshner. " People addicted to marijuana may continue to use the drug at least partly to prevent the onset of withdrawal symptoms. Identifying the exact nature of this syndrome is crucial to developing treatment strategies for those attempting to stop their marijuana use." The Harvard study, using a computer test of aggressive behavior, compared 17 long-term heavy users of marijuana with 20 people who were infrequent or former smokers.

All of the volunteers were abstaining from the use of marijuana and all other drugs of abuse during the study. To avoid any suggestive influences, the investigators did not reveal to the volunteers that their aggressive

behavior was being studied. Instead, the volunteers were told that they were participating in a test designed to measure movements and a variety of physiological characteristics, such as pulse rate and body temperature. They were also told that another volunteer of the same sex was sitting in another experimental chamber and would be participating in the test with them. Facing each volunteer in the experimental chamber was a computer monitor and a response panel.

On a panel were two buttons, labeled A and B. Pressing A 100 times allowed the volunteer to gain 1 point, which was worth 50 cents. Pressing B 10 times subtracted 1 point from the other participant, who, in actuality, was not a person but a computer. Three 1-second beeps signaled that the "opponent" was subtracting 1 point from the volunteer. The researchers labeled the pressing of B as an aggressive response, and the point subtractions from the volunteers as provocations. The volunteers participated in one of these sessions on each of five different occasions: at the beginning of the study, and at days 1, 3, 7, and 28 of abstinence.

Results showed that the current marijuana users became significantly more aggressive, as indicated by the number of times they pressed B, on days 3 and 7 of withdrawal, as compared to the infrequent or former marijuana users. (National Institute on Drug Abuse) April 20, 1999 B. Each youth's brain wave tracings (Electroencephalograms) showed dysfunction. Research studies of youngsters from kindergarten through high school show that previously well-adjusted and intellectually endowed children inexplicably are falling apart academically and emotionally in the teenage years with the only new factor being that of occasional marijuana use.

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Marijuana use leads to an inability to recognize good from bad, an inability to retain a strong self-image, and an inability to visualize and plan for the future. Using marijuana makes "great" people average, and average people "dumb". Marijuana use is toxic to all cells, and most especially toxic to brain cells.

(Robert C. Gilkeson, M. D.)C.

Well adjusted and intellectually endowed children inexplicably are falling apart academically and emotionally with occasional marijuana use. Research studies of youngsters from kindergarten through high school show that previously well-adjusted and intellectually endowed children inexplicably are falling apart academically and emotionally in the teenage years with the only new factor being that of occasional marijuana use. Marijuana use leads to an inability to recognize good from bad, an inability to retain a strong self-image, and an inability to visualize and plan for the future. Using marijuana makes "great" people average, and average people "dumb". Marijuana use is toxic to all cells, and most especially toxic to brain cells. (Robert C. Gilkeson, M.

D.)D. These impairments are the cause of the increase of violent and non-violent juvenile crimes. These impairments are the cause of increased violent and non-violent juvenile crime, truancy and school dropout, teenage runaways and vagrancy, teenage prostitution and pregnancy, venereal disease, adolescent depression and suicide, poly-substance use and adolescent psychiatric referrals. Most alarming of all is the fact that we have

witnessed the appearance of a new chronic organic brainsyndrome called “burnout” caused by marijuana use.

Robert C. Gilkeson, M. D.)Social Issues