

Marijuana and Alcohol Negatively Impact Lifetime Achievement in Young Adults

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New research presented today at APHA's 2017 Annual Meeting and Expo examined the effect of marijuana use and dependence on life achievement in young adults. The study found that young adults dependent on marijuana and alcohol were less likely to achieve adult life goals, defined by the study as educational achievement, full-time employment, marriage and social economic potential.

Researchers with UConn Health examined data from the Collaborative Study on the Genetics of Alcoholism, supported by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Study subjects included 1,165 young adults, whose habits were first assessed at age 12 and then at two-year intervals until they were between 25 and 34 years old.

The study found that, overall, individuals who were dependent on both marijuana and alcohol showed lower levels of educational achievement, were less likely to be employed full time, were less likely to get married and had lower social economic potential.

Research also revealed that dependence may have a more severe effect on young men. Dependent young men saw less achievement across all four measurements, while dependent women were less likely to obtain a college degree and had lower social economic potential, but their likelihood of obtaining full-time employment or marrying was not significantly affected.

"This study found that chronic marijuana use in adolescence was negatively associated with achieving important developmental milestones in young adulthood. Awareness of marijuana's potential deleterious effects will be important moving forward given the current move in the U.S. toward marijuana legalization for recreational/medicinal use," said study author Elizabeth Harari, MD. Harari's research was supported by Victor Hesselbrock, PhD, and Grace Chan, PhD.

This research will be presented during the APHA Annual Meeting on Sunday, Nov. 5, at 4:30 p.m. during session 2082: Latest Findings on Cannabis.