

The Effect of Marijuana Use on the Risk for Schizophrenia

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The article “The Effects of Marijuana Use on the Risk for Schizophrenia” was developed by Eden Evins, Alan I. Green, John M. Kane, and Sir Robin M. Murray from CME Institute of Physicians Postgraduate Press, Inc. The title speaks for itself, as the article discusses the effect of the drug use on the risk for schizophrenia. The experts explored various factors associated with utilization of cannabis and risk of schizophrenia. The points discussed in the article include risk factors, consequences of using cannabis, the potency of the different cannabis types and their respective effects, the impact of the combination of the substance with alcohol and tobacco on the users and finally the effect of legalizing the marijuana use.

One of the main points the authors make is that much more people should be aware of the risks related to marijuana use. In particular, they pinpoint such population groups as pediatricians, child psychiatrists, families with preadolescent children, school counselors and others who interact with youths. It is of utmost importance to deliver the message to the public that some people have a significant increase in risk for schizophrenia because of marijuana use.

Also, the specialists state that there is the correlation between marijuana use and the disease, and that the risk of psychosis increases in proportion to the amount of marijuana use, although multiple interactions of different factors also contribute to the risk. Schizophrenia is mostly hereditary condition and such factors as genetic predisposition in combination with the environmental factors like marijuana use increase the risk of developing psychosis. Adolescents who are used to early and heavy consumption of cannabis show greater vulnerability to developing schizophrenia in comparison to those who use marijuana later in their life. The use of cannabis among people with psychotic disorder worsens the symptoms and hinders the progress of recovery (Evins et al., 2012).

Besides, the experts argue that due to the existence and usage of different types of marijuana which are characterized by varying percentages of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD), it is hard to draw a general conclusion on how the substance usage results in disease development. The potency level has increased over time with a continued decrease in CBD, which acts as a protective component against psychosis. The authors concluded that cannabis use has cognitive effects on psychotic and nonpsychotic persons including reduction in IQ level over time, learning difficulty and memory problems, but most are reversible. The drug use, alcohol and tobacco alter the brain functioning, which as a result increases the risk of psychosis development among individuals with genetic risk for schizophrenia. Therefore, the article suggests that legalizing cannabis use sends a wrong message to teenagers, who perceive it as safe, and encourages its use, thus exposing them to the risk (Evins et al., 2012).

Although the exploration is wide some areas are not covered extensively, for instance, there is no certain point of view on the potency of cannabis and its risk in the discussion. The experts acknowledge the lack of sufficient research to rely on while making a convincing explanation.

All in all, the article gives a broad standpoint by presenting commentaries of different experts, which enriches the output. Besides, the fact that the experts used references to other researchers in the explanation of the various issues gives validity to the reached conclusions.

References

Evins, A. E., Green, A. I., Kane, J. M., & Murray, R. M. (2012). The Effect of Marijuana Use on the Risk for Schizophrenia. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 73(11), 1463-1468.

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