Psychopathology
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Substance Abuse Research Paper
Cannabis Use Disorder

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A Substance Abuse can be defined as a repeated compulsive behavior in relation to the use of a substance such as alcohol, caffeine, cannabis, hallucinogens, inhalants and so on. People usually turn to substances such as these as a way to escape from their everyday stressful and overwhelming lifestyles, or to cope in order to get through to the next day. The substance then becomes abusive when people form a dependency for the drug, believing that they cannot go on without the use of it.

Cannabis or marijuana in its nature is one of the most popular psychoactive substances around as well as the most accessible drug available, especially among adolescence. Though the addictive components of the drug are still being deliberated, and controversy still surrounds the idea of it as a holistic medicine, the use of cannabis has been classified in the DSM-5 as a substance related and addictive disorders. Perpetual use in large quantities will cause an increase in dependency. The manner in which Cannabis is used is usually by smoking, vaping, gravity bongs, dabbing, oils, edibles, capsules and recently with spays.

Cannabis originates from the flowers of the Cannabis Sativa plants which carries hundreds of psychoactive molecules called cannabinoids (Mechoulam, 2000). The cannabinoids break down to THC and CBD each carrying different psychoactive effects exclusively. The THC concentration in the cannabinoid that carries the high-grade recreational drug that is often referred to as marijuana then gives users euphoric and analgesic effects with an increase in appetite and oftentimes mild hallucination (Mechoulam, 2000). Meanwhile, CBD doesn't carry the psychoactive effects and is usually used medicinally for its anti-inflammatory, anti-seizure and anxiety reducing elements. There are two types of cannabinoid receptors, type 1 and type 2. You can find most of type 1 receptors in the central nervous system. When there is a reaction in the brain to type 1 receptors, activity in certain parts of the brain are slowed down which may

cause mild hallucinations, impairment in both the ability to learn and retain memory as well as decrease stress amongst other things (Mechoulam, 2000). Dopamine is also released which produces feelings of pleasure and reward. This explains clearly why Cannabis can lead to addictive disorders. On the other hand, receptor type 2 leans more towards the immune system and peripheral nerve system making it more acceptable because of its curative components.

As mentioned above there are several different effects on users depending on the concentration level of the drug. There is a lot of controversy that surrounds the conversation on whether or not the use of Cannabis is good or bad for users. Since Cannabis contributes to mental changes from the use of the drug, it can lead to becoming a psychiatric issue and increase the risk of being a psychotic illness. Like any substance, Cannabis comes with a variety of withdrawal symptoms such as irritability, craving, anxiety, sleep disorders and overall discomfort in a person's state of being. This can make a person just want the drug even more causing them to develop dependency and overuse (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).
According to the DSM-5 an individual must check off at least two of the patterns on the diagnostic criteria (a), as well as be consumed to alleviate or avert from experiencing symptoms of withdrawal in order to be considered for Cannabis Use Disorder. Persons with the disorder may use the drug throughout the day over a period of months or years and can be under the influence for many hours in a 24-hour period (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Treatment from the abuse of the drug can be medication as well as behavioral treatment such as individual psychotherapy or support group programs. Seeking effective treatment will help individuals to explore their behavioral issues and learn how to resolve these issues.

References

Mechoulam, R. (2000, September). Looking Back at Cannabis Research

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders
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