



ARTICLE COMMENTS

Marijuana, Memory, Concentration and Decision-Making in the Elderly

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1. Introduction

Many papers have been written about the effects of marijuana on adolescents and young adults. This includes cognitive impairment (e.g., Meier et al., 2012, Nešpor and Csémy, 2013). Less attention has so far been paid to the effects of cannabis drugs on memory, concentration and decision-making in older people. This makes the large study by Kurtzman et al. (2022) all the more valuable. The cited authors found that persons aged 50 years and older who reported smoking marijuana within the past month were 1.5 times more likely to report impairments in memory, concentration, and decision making. This finding is not surprising. In a controlled study, Honarmand et al. (2011) found cognitive impairment in a group of people who used cannabis to alleviate the spasticity that accompanies multiple sclerosis (the average age of the people in this group was approximately 44 years).

2. Implications for practice

Exaggerated expectations in relation to cannabis drugs lead some older people to abuse these substances. They are unaware of the risks and possible side effects. These include, in addition to impaired memory and concentration, interactions with alcohol or medication, as well as other health problems (e.g., Desai et al., 2018, Yang et al., 2022).

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