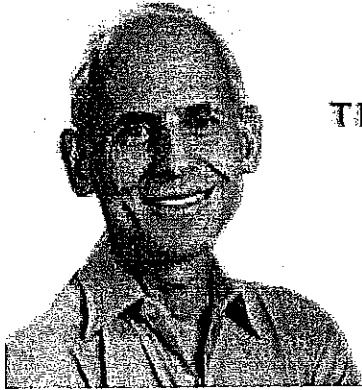


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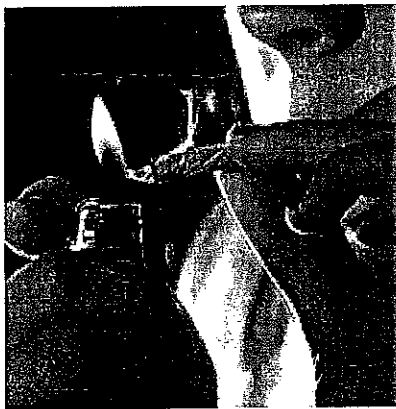


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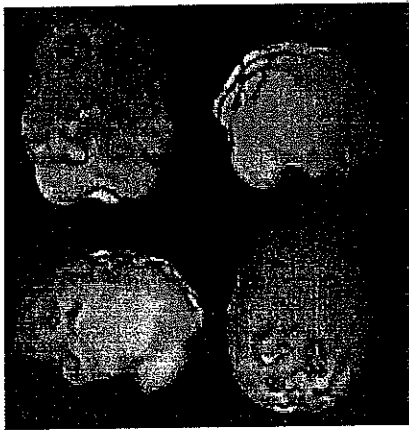
MARIJUANA CAUSES LONG-TERM BRAIN CHANGES

Posted on February 6, 2014 by Amen Clinics



Now that marijuana has been approved for medical and recreational use in a few U.S. states, heated debates over its safety are swirling in the media. Although marijuana doesn't necessarily pose the same immediate, life-threatening dangers as alcohol, we have seen that chronic, long-term use does cause significant brain changes—chiefly, **slowed activity in the frontal and temporal lobes; areas of the brain involved with focus, concentration, motivation, memory, learning, and mood stability.**

Dr. Kabran Chapek has witnessed this first-hand at our Bellevue Clinic in Washington State, where marijuana was legalized for medical use in 2012.



SPECT Image:

25 year-old daily marijuana smoker

He says, "I'm not surprised when someone with anxiety tells me that they use marijuana or alcohol to help them sleep, or calm their nerves. It's predictably people with over activity in their brains and problems like anxiety or PTSD who use sedating substances—we can see it on their SPECT scans.

The problem with marijuana is that it's not selective. Not only does it calm the parts of the brain that are overactive, it calms the entire brain—long-term—through a slow and insidious process."

Some argue that marijuana is not addictive, but as this study demonstrates, it is a drug like any other. **Anything that makes us feel good—be it food, drugs, alcohol, exercise, gambling, or sex—causes a rewiring of the pleasure centers in the brain and intensifies cravings for it.**

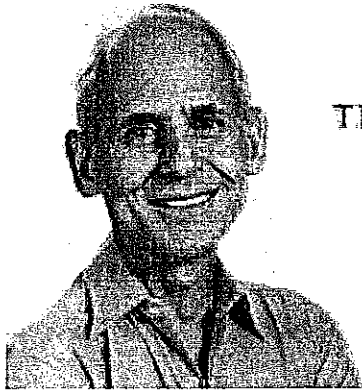
When someone stops using marijuana, significant irritability is common as the temporal lobes regain full functioning. According to Dr. Chapek, one can expect to see improvements in motivation, concentration, and focus after abstaining for just 2-3 months.

Click here to find marijuana case studies from the Amen Clinics.

At the Amen Clinics, we can help you learn how to calm anxiety and overactive brain activity without causing long-term issues. Call us today at 1-888-208-2057 or tell us more to schedule an appointment.

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MARIJUANA AND BRAIN CHANGES – PART 2

Posted on February 20, 2014 by Daniel G. Amen, MD



Patient SPECT Image
16 year old
2 years of Marijuana use

A couple of weeks ago we published a blog titled, "Marijuana Causes Long-term Brain Changes," and I was very pleased to see all of the great conversation that the blog generated in the comments!

This blog was not intended to take any sort of political stance and I actually think that alcohol kills more people, so the issue of decriminalizing marijuana makes good sense, especially for medical issues like chronic pain or cancer. With that said, I am not a fan of alcohol or marijuana because they both damage the brain.

I myself have witnessed these brain changes time and time again over the span of my 30-year career, as have many of the medical doctors, psychiatrists, and psychologists on our team here at the Amen Clinics. We care about you and your family, so it is our duty to deliver relevant information about brain health, as uncomfortable as those truths may be.

As the person who has probably seen more functional brain scans on marijuana users than any other human being, know that I often see a toxic appearance in chronic marijuana users, which looks like “holes” or decreased activity and blood flow in the brain.

I consistently see problems with motivation in people who use marijuana long-term. Essentially, you may be calming down the parts of the brain that have you feeling anxious, tense, or angry... but you are also slowing down very important parts that help you with motivation, focus, planning ahead, and impulse control.

Now, listen to this interview with Dr. Kabran Chapek from our Bellevue, Washington Clinic to learn more about how long-term marijuana use affects the brain...

Keep reading:

- **Amen Clinics blog: Marijuana Causes Long-term Brain Changes**
- **STUDY:** Acute and non-acute Effects of Cannabis on Human Memory Function: a Critical Review of Neuroimaging Studies
- **STUDY:** Brain morphological changes and early marijuana use: a magnetic resonance and positron emission tomography study
- **STUDY:** Altered brain tissue composition in heavy marijuana users
- **STUDY:** Dose-related neurocognitive effects of marijuana use