

Substance Dependence on Marijuana-Case History

- Mr. B, a 40-year-old white male, was first seen because of concerns about his marijuana use. He had been using marijuana since the age of 16 and was using currently approximately five times a day, starting at 9:30 a.m., when he got to work, and stopping at 3:00 p.m., as he did not want his live-in girlfriend to know about his use. She complained that it decreased his energy and sex drive, and changed the way he related (such as “going on and on about silly things”). She had stopped her own marijuana use about two years earlier and wanted him to stop as well. Both wanted children but she refused to have any until he quit marijuana and, in fact, threatened to leave the relationship unless he stopped.
- His longest period off marijuana was six weeks, occurring two years prior to this presentation. He had a history of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, diagnosed as an adolescent and treated unsuccessfully for two years with methylphenidate. He felt that marijuana helped him with his work in public relations by enhancing his creativity and was afraid that cessation would decrease his ability to come up with novel ideas. Prior quit attempts were complicated, as several other co-workers were also users of marijuana.
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- Given the history of unsuccessful quit attempts, he was started on dronabinol, 10 mg three times a day. Three weeks later he reported doing well, with a marked decrease in marijuana use except for a period when he ran out of dronabinol and became quite depressed. Two days after re-starting the dronabinol, the depression had passed and he was feeling good again, except for complaints of decreased energy and creativity compared to when he was on marijuana.
- Levin, F. R. and Kleber, H.D. Use of dronabinol for cannabis dependence: Two case reports and review. American Journal of Addiction 17:161-164
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Commentary

“Cannabis is a controversial plant these days. It evokes the widest spectrum of emotional reactions of adoration to revulsion that I have ever witnessed in response to a weed”

(National Institute of Health Monograph, 1980)

Commentary

“The greatest danger to public safety today probably involves driving a car while in a state of acute intoxication. This danger increases dramatically if alcohol has also been ingested”

(Julien, p.187, 1985)

Quote

“Man when I’m up on the weed, I’m really livin. I float up and up and up until I’m miles above the earth. Then baby I begin to come apart. My fingers leave my hands, my hands leave my wrists, my arms and legs leave my body and I float all over the universe”

(Bloomquist, 1967 California Medicine 106: 346-353)

Quote

“Walking becomes effortless. The paresthesias and changes in body sensation help to give an astounding feeling of lightness to the limbs and body. Elation continues: he laughs uncontrollably and explosively for brief periods of time without at times the slightest provocation. If there is a reason, it quickly fades, the point of the joke is lost immediately. Speech is rapid, flighty, the subject has the impression that his conversation is witty, brilliant; ideas flow quickly”

(Bromberg, 1934, American Journal of Psychiatry 91: 303-330)