



ILCAAAP

Illinois Church Action on Alcohol & Addiction Problems

## Marijuana Alert - April 4, 2023



### What is long-term cannabis use doing to our brains?

A 2022 study found that long-term cannabis users had cognitive deficits and lower hippocampal volume at age 45 compared with non-users and users of other substances. Legalization and decriminalization efforts, coupled with medical marijuana programs, may be making midlife cannabis use more common.

Clinicians may want to consider making cannabis-use screening a mainstay of clinical practice for middle-aged patients to avoid potential memory declines.

Is cannabis as harmless as some would think? A March 2022 study published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* suggests otherwise for middle-aged adults.[1]

### Research sheds light on the effects

Currently, there are only 11 states without medical or recreational cannabis programs.[3] And according to a 2020 *JAMA Internal Medicine* research letter, cannabis use among Americans aged 65 years and older rose from .4% in 2006 and 2007 to 2.9% in 2015 and 2016.[4]

“What we found was that the long-term cannabis users did show midlife cognitive deficits relative to non-users and relative to long-term tobacco and alcohol users.”

— Madeline H. Meier, Ph.D. [READ](#)

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