

## Doctors: Pot Triggers Psychotic Symptoms

By MARIA CHENG, AP Medical Writer

LONDON — New findings on marijuana's damaging effect on the brain show the drug triggers temporary psychotic symptoms in some people, including hallucinations and paranoid delusions, doctors say.

British doctors took brain scans of 15 healthy volunteers given small doses of two of the active ingredients of cannabis, as well as a placebo.

One compound, cannabidiol, or CBD, made people more relaxed. But even small doses of another component, tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, produced temporary psychotic symptoms in people, including hallucinations and paranoid delusions, doctors said.

"We've long suspected that cannabis is linked to psychoses, but we have never before had scans to show how the mechanism works," said Dr. Philip McGuire, a professor of psychiatry at King's College, London.

In analyzing MRI scans of the study's subjects, McGuire and his colleagues found that THC interfered with activity in the inferior frontal cortex, a region of the brain associated with paranoia.

"THC is switching off that regulator," McGuire said, effectively unleashing the paranoia usually kept under control by the frontal cortex.

In another study, doctors at Yale University tested the impact of THC on 150 healthy volunteers and 13 people with stable schizophrenia. Nearly half of the healthy subjects experienced psychotic symptoms when given the drug.

While the doctors expected to see marijuana improve the conditions of their schizophrenic subjects, since their patients reported that the drug calmed them, they found that the reverse was true.

"I was surprised by the results," said Dr. Deepak Cyril D'Souza, an associate professor of psychiatry at Yale University's School of Medicine. "In practice, we found that cannabis is very bad for people with schizophrenia," he said.

Understanding how marijuana affects the brain may ultimately lead experts to a better understanding of mental health in general.

"We don't know the basis of paranoia or anxiety," said McGuire.

"It is possible that we could use cannabis in controlled studies to understand psychoses better," he said. McGuire theorized that [we] could one day lead to specific drugs targeting the responsible regions of the brain.

## One Source President To Speak at Unemployment Insurance Forum

Editor Ty Weaver

One Source Toxicology Laboratory President, Stan Gerlich, will speak at the Unemployment Insurance Issues Conference on May 30, 2007 in Dallas, Texas. The conference will focus on the implication of the retiring workforce on unemployment insurance and the effect of drug testing on UI eligibility.

Gerlich's presentation, "All You Need to Know About Drug Testing," takes the audience through the course of drug testing analysis to ensure compliance and the reliability of using a certified forensic toxicology laboratory. The presentation will address certifications, specimen collections, chain of custody and the laboratory process.

A hot topic at many of Gerlich's presentations is the issue of validity test-

ing. Validity testing involves screening a specimen to ensure it is human urine. The laboratory personnel measure the creatinine, specific gravity, pH and screen for any masking agents, or oxidizing adulterants, added to the specimen. This process is conducted during the screening.

Stan Gerlich is speaking because of a study he and his staff conducted that shows the costs of medical insurance declining if a company implements a drug testing program. The study was conducted over a period of four years for Link Staffing. In that time, the company saved over \$1.2 million in worker's compensation claims.

For more information about the validity testing process, access the One Source Toxicology Laboratory website, click the "news" link, and download the volume 1 issue 8 edition of the newsletter.



### What Is "Strawberry Quick"?

- Methamphetamine with flavored additive added during the cooking process.
- No change in the potency of the drug
- This product is designed to target younger audience.
  - The users do not see it as being as harmful as standard methamphetamine

### Symptoms of Use

- Inability to sleep
- Increased sensitivity to noise
- Nervous physical activity, like scratching
  - Irritability, dizziness, or confusion
  - Wakefulness
- Tremors or even convulsions
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, and risk of stroke
  - Presence of inhaling paraphernalia, such as razor blades, mirrors, straws, or glass pipes
  - Presence of injecting paraphernalia, such as syringes, heated spoons, or surgical tubing
- Symptoms may last five to six days

Source: Allen Police Department