Parents & Prevention

Delaying Initiation and Reducing Teen Marijuana Use

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Symposium on Legal Marijuana in Washington: Shaping a Research Agenda, November, 2013
Four Takeaways:

- Prevention should start early
- Important risk factors will likely increase
- Parents need information & tools
- Public health campaign is overdue & should start now
Prevention should start early
Prevention Should Start Early

- Early initiation is strongly associated with negative outcomes
- Extensive research on alcohol & tobacco shows that early initiation is a key mechanism for later problems
- Early initiation is an effective focus of public health campaigns
Prevention Should Start Early

Research on marijuana also points to risks of early initiation

Adults Reporting Illicit Drug Dependence in Past Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Marijuana Initiation</th>
<th>14 or younger</th>
<th>15 to 17</th>
<th>18 or older</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
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Important risk factors will likely increase
Important Risk Factors Will Likely Increase

- Legal availability and favorable norms have increased
- Parent and peer marijuana use may increase
Perceived Harm is Related to Teen Use

U.S. Twelfth Graders Reporting Perceived “Great Risk of Harm” and Marijuana Use in Past Month, 1975-2012

Our state’s Healthy Youth Survey will track availability, norms, & use among teens, pre- and post-legalization.

HYS will be of great value to the nation to document changes after marijuana legalization.

I-502 funds HYS ... the state should keep this going.
Parents need information & tools
Parents are Essential to Prevention

- Parents are an important influence on their children’s drug use through high school.

- Parents can influence their children through their...
  - Knowledge of the legal age limit
  - Norms about marijuana use
  - Parenting practices
Do Parents Know the Legal Age for Use?

What is the legal age limit for marijuana use?

Nonrepresentative sample of parents of Tacoma 10th graders

N=115. Source: Mason et al., 2013.
Based on HYS: Children who perceive their parents as having favorable attitudes toward drug use were...

- 5 times more likely to have tried marijuana by 8th grade
- 6 times more likely to be a frequent user by 10th grade

Parenting Practices are an Important Risk Factor

- Based on HYS: Children in families with poor family management (unclear expectations, poor monitoring, inconsistent discipline) were...

- 3 times more likely to be a frequent marijuana user by 10th grade

Are Parents Discussing the Law with Their Children?

What issues did you discuss?

- Any discussion: 70%
- What is legal and illegal: 36%
- Household rules about marijuana: 51%

Nonrepresentative sample of parents of Tacoma 10th graders

N=115.
Source: Mason et al., 2013.
Parents need to...

- Know the law
- Know that risk of teen use will likely increase
- Know the best tools to talk with their children...
  - Set marijuana expectations, monitor & reinforce them
Parents & Prevention of Teen Marijuana Use

- Public health campaign is overdue & should start now
Engage opinion leaders to disseminate a few simple messages

Governor, Physicians, Clergy, School Staff

Know legal limits on marijuana use

Early use is a risk factor for later problems

Parents should set expectations for underage marijuana use
What We Need To Do in 2014

- Get parents resources & programs
  - Broad dissemination of prevention messages & resources
    - (TV, Radio, Internet ... link to ADAI)
  - Make effective parenting programs available
  - Engage opinion leaders to promote attendance at parenting programs
Four Takeaways:

- Prevention should start early
- Important risk factors will likely increase
- Parents need information & tools
- Public health campaign is overdue & should start now