

Long-term marijuana use associated with periodontal disease

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While using marijuana for as long as 20 years was associated with periodontal disease, it was not associated with some other physical health problems in early midlife at age 38, according to an article published online by *JAMA Psychiatry*.

Policymakers, [health care professionals](#) and the public want to know whether recreational cannabis use is associated with physical [health problems](#) later in life after major policy changes in the U.S.

Madeline H. Meier, Ph.D., of Arizona State University, Tempe, and coauthors used data from 1,037 individuals who were born in New Zealand in 1972 and 1973 and were followed to age 38. The authors looked at whether cannabis use from age 18 to 38 was associated with

[physical health](#) problems at age 38.

Self-reported and laboratory measures of physical health were obtained for periodontal health, lung function, systemic inflammation and metabolic health.

Just more than half of the 1,037 participants were male; 484 had ever used tobacco daily and 675 had ever used cannabis.

Cannabis was associated with poorer periodontal health at age 38 but was not associated with the other physical health problems, according to the results. Other analyses suggest [cannabis users](#) brushed and flossed less than others and were more likely to be dependent on alcohol.

Study limitations include self-reported cannabis use. The study also was limited to a specific set of health problems assessed in early midlife.

"This study has a number of implications. First, cannabis use for up to 20 years is not associated with a specific set of physical health problems in early midlife. The sole exception is that cannabis use is associated with [periodontal disease](#). Second, cannabis use for up to 20 years is not associated with net metabolic benefits (i.e., lower rates of metabolic syndrome). Third, our results should be interpreted in the context of prior research showing that [cannabis](#) use is associated with accidents and injuries, bronchitis, acute cardiovascular events, and, possibly, infectious diseases and cancer, as well as poor psychosocial and mental health outcomes," the study concludes.

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