

Effects of Cannabis Use and Subclinical ADHD Symptomology on Attention Based Tasks in Adolescents and Young Adults

Wallace AL, Wade NE, Hatcher KF, Lisdahl KM.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE:

Research has demonstrated comorbidity between Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and cannabis use, and some have proposed that subclinical ADHD symptoms may explain attentional deficits in cannabis users. Here we investigated whether subclinical ADHD symptoms and cannabis use independently or interactively predict performance on attention tasks in adolescents and young adults.

METHOD:

Seventy-two participants (cannabis users (MJ) = 34, Controls = 38) completed neuropsychological tasks of inhibition and attention. Parent report on the Child Behaviors Checklist reflected current ADHD symptoms. Multiple regression analyses examined whether ADHD symptoms and cannabis use independently or interactively predicted cognitive outcomes.

RESULTS:

Cannabis use was significantly associated with slower CPT hit rate response. Subclinical ADHD symptoms did not independently predict or moderate cannabis effects.

CONCLUSIONS:

Cannabis users demonstrated slower response rate during an attentional task. Subclinical ADHD symptoms did not predict any deficits. As such, attention deficits seen in cannabis users are more related to substance use than ADHD symptomatology.