Effects of Marijuana on Driving

Community Health Project
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What is the leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds?
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Motor vehicle accidents
The risk of involvement in a motor vehicle accident (MVA) increases 10-fold after marijuana smoking.
Cannabis is one of the most frequent substances found in the blood of drivers who are drug-impaired and/or involved in accidents.
Research involves...

- Simulator on-road studies
- Structural and functional imaging of the brain

- Difficulties in studying the effects of marijuana on driving...
  - History of cannabis use
  - Routes of administration
  - Dose range
  - Study design
Effects of marijuana on driving
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- Impaired:
  - Reaction time
  - Perception
  - Short term memory
  - Attention
  - Motor skills
  - Tracking
  - Skilled activities
  - Lane position (increased lane weaving)
  - Cognitive functioning

- Marijuana affects the motor system in your brain (cortico-striatal networks) and cognition
- Drivers attempt to compensate by driving more slowly, but this does not work
- Combining alcohol with marijuana makes the impairment WORSE, especially lane weaving
How many people drive under the influence of Marijuana?

- 22% of students rode in a car or other vehicle in the past 30 days with someone who was using marijuana.

- 15% of students who drove a car in the past 30 days reported driving after using marijuana.
  - Males > females
  - 11th and 12th grade > 9th and 10th grade
What happens when you get pulled over?

- Field sobriety test
- Drug recognition experts
- Blood tests

- The charge of a DUI can be determined by evaluation
References


