

Pot and Pop: New Research Finds Stronger Link Between Music and Marijuana Use Among Teens

ScienceDaily (Dec. 23, 2009) — Teens who frequently listen to music that contains references to marijuana are more likely to use the drug than their counterparts with less exposure to such lyrics, according to a University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine study online now in the journal *Addiction*.

"Based on an analysis of survey data from 959 ninth-graders, we found that students who listen to music with the most references to marijuana are almost twice as likely to have used the drug than their peers whose musical tastes favor songs less focused on substance use, even after controlling for confounding factors," said Brian Primack, M.D., Ed.M., M.S., lead author of the study and assistant professor of medicine and pediatrics at Pitt's School of Medicine.

"Interestingly, we also found that exposure to marijuana in music was not associated with other high-risk behaviors, such as excessive alcohol consumption. This suggests that there is a real link between the marijuana lyrics and marijuana use," said Dr. Primack.

To accurately estimate marijuana exposure in music, researchers used an improved process to calculate the exposure, which incorporated student report of music exposure and favorite artists as well as intensive content analysis of the top 794 songs from 2005, 2006 and 2007 based on Billboard Magazine's year-end charts.

Researchers estimated that the average study participant listened to 21.8 hours of music per week and were exposed to an estimated 40 marijuana references in music per day. Twelve percent identified themselves as current marijuana users, with 32 percent identifying themselves as having previously tried the substance. Compared to those who cited a favorite artist with zero songs with cannabis references, students who identified a favorite artist with three or more songs with cannabis references had nearly double the odds of being current cannabis users.

Researchers controlled for such demographic variables as age, race, gender, parental education and school grades in analyzing the data.

"Although it may be that heavy exposure to music about marijuana causes marijuana smoking, it may also be that those who smoke marijuana seek out music with lyrics related to marijuana," noted

Dr. Primack. "In either case, these results may help us develop more effective programs on drug education. For example, media literacy programs may help young people more accurately analyze and evaluate the marijuana-related messages they are likely to hear in popular music."

Co-authors of the study are Erika L. Douglas and Kevin L. Kraemer, both of the University of Pittsburgh.

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- . Brian A. Primack, Erika L. Douglas, & Kevin L. Kraemer. **Exposure to cannabis in popular music and cannabis use among adolescents.** *Addiction*, 2010; DOI: [10.1111/j.1360-0443.2009.02801.x](#)

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