

Marijuana and cancer

The toxicity of marijuana (leaves and flower of Cannabis) has been dangerously underestimated, **especially its association with cancer**. This false “innocence” is now being challenged by new studies. Recent findings show **“a growing population of younger patients with high cannabis consumption who are presenting with aggressive cancers.”** While the link between marijuana use and testicular cancer and respiratory illnesses, has been well-reported, its link to these deadly cancers are only now becoming more obvious.

Nowadays, we have so many varieties of entertainments, **it is insanity to even consider marijuana or other drugs (even alcohol or tobacco) as recreational drugs**. They are all detrimental to health. No less than poison. Medical (use of) marijuana, on the other hand, is a welcome addition to the physician’s armamentarium.

The vital role of parents and society as a whole in minimizing (if not preventing) the use of “recreational” drugs (which should actually be renamed devastation drugs) can never be overemphasized.

Brain Boosters

For fear of dementia, especially Alzheimer’s, countless people are resorting to brain supplements, hoping to stave them off and maintain healthy cognitive and memory functions. But the question is, **Are brain supplements on the market only “hype” and actually useless**, like almost all pill and potion supplements advertised as “super drugs”?

“Media consumers are bombarded daily with aggressive, testimonial-driven ads for pricey supplements purported to sharpen memory, focus, and working brain function...Some even claim to stop or slow the development

of dementia,” according to MS Medical News. **There is no evidence they do.**

The trillion-dollar food supplement industry, **hiding behind its self-described “non-drug - food supplements”** to avoid strict standard quality/safety regulation by the US-FDA, has always been suspect. **It is unfortunate the public is left exposed to false claims and potential health safety concerns and fend for themselves.**

Last year, the Federal Trade Commission and a federal district court in New York **”ordered the manufacturer of *Prevagen* to stop its claims on the grounds they lacked reliable evidence”.**

Indeed, “Caveat emptor!” is always a wise principle in more ways than one to protect consumers.

The ever-popular multivitamin/minerals appear to confer some health benefits. In a large study by the NIH-funded randomized clinical trial, researchers found that **“older adults given a multivitamin had higher global cognition scores than those who did not take it.** Specific effects on global cognition, episodic memory, and executive function were noted. The improvement was most pronounced in those with a history of cardiovascular disease.”

Just 15 minutes

Tracking nearly 80,000 individuals in southeastern states for 17 years, a major study showed **that a 15-minute brisk walking every day reduced mortality risk (dying prematurely),** especially from cardiovascular diseases, by almost 20 percent, while hours of slow walking provided much smaller benefits, 4 percent which is insignificant.

Can we spare 15 minutes a day to maximize the full potential of our natural “Expiration Date”?

Alcohol and pancreatic cancer

Does alcohol consumption increase the risk for cancer of the pancreas? This has been a lingering query for centuries. Today, a global study of more than 2 million people, pooled data from 30 prospective cohorts, found that **“daily alcohol intake was associated with a ‘modest’ increased risk for pancreatic cancer** in both women and men, regardless of smoking status. This massive study also **confirms there is no safe level of alcohol**. One drink is one too many.

“I think this shows that alcohol use is a robust risk factor for pancreatic cancer,” said Genkinger, associate professor, epidemiology, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, New York City, noting that **even more moderate drinking levels**— no more than one drink for women and two for men — **might be enough to boost pancreatic cancer risk.**” – MedScape.

Cure for Alzheimer’s?

Today, there is no known cure for Alzheimer’s dementia. **In the United States there are 6.7 million people with Alzheimer’s, 55 million around the world.** One in 9 people (10.8 percent) aged 65 and older have Alzheimer’s; 5 percent among those aged 65 to 74; 13.1 percent of those 75-84; and **33.3 percent for those 85 and older.**

Researchers around the globe are actively seeking for a cure for this dementia. One current avenue is called **repurposing**, experimenting on currently approved medications that are used for other diseases.

“Two cancer medications that may help overturn brain changes caused by Alzheimer’s disease, possibly slowing or even reversing the disease’s symptoms,” according to Marina Sirota, PhD, professor and interim director of the University of California — San Francisco Bakar Computational Health Sciences Institute.

“We started with a set of 1,300 drugs and narrowed it down to the combination of *letrozole and irinotecan* through data driven analysis using both molecular and clinical data,” Sirota said. (Letrozole, used to treat breast cancer, and irinotecan, used to treat colorectal and lung cancer).

This new discovery provides hope to those patients ravaged by Alzheimer’s and their family who take care of them who are also suffering from the gravity of the duties and responsibilities, **much more difficult than taking care of several infants at the same time.**

Countless independent studies have been ongoing around the world, and this repurposing with a combination of drugs for cancer will inspire more research globally, which might then expedite the final realization of a cure for **Alzheimer’s Disease, a much-dreaded illness worse than death itself.**

Philip S. Chua, MD, FACS, FPCS, a Cardiac Surgeon Emeritus based in Northwest Indiana and Las Vegas, Nevada, is an international medical lecturer/author, Health Advocate, medical missionary, newspaper columnist, and Chairman of the Filipino United Network-USA, a 501(c)3 humanitarian foundation in the United States. He is a decorated recipient of the Indiana Sagamore of the Wabash Award in 1995, presented by then Indiana Governor, US senator, and later a presidential candidate, Evan Bayh. Other Sagamore past awardees include President Harry S. Truman, President George HW Bush, Astronaut Gus Grissom, pugilist Muhammad Ali, David Letterman, distinguished educators, scientists, etc. (Wikipedia). Websites: FUN8888.com, Today.SPSAtoday.com, and philipSchua.com Email: scalpelpen@gmail.com