

Study links cannabis, disease

BY LAURA MARCINEK
STAFF WRITER

Young people who are heavy smokers of cannabis, a substance found in marijuana, could be at a significant risk for gum disease, according to a study released Tuesday.

The study found that participants who used cannabis between the ages of 18 and 32 were more likely to have mild and severe periodontal disease than those who never used the substance.

"What we found out is that marijuana does pose a risk above smoking cigarettes," said James Beck, professor of dental ecology at the UNC School of Dentistry, who helped author the study.

Periodontal disease is the loss of gum support around the tooth caused by microorganisms in plaque under the teeth and gums. Some people have the genetic ability to fight the disease more effectively than others. If untreated, the disease can sometimes lead to tooth loss.

The two major risk factors for gum disease are diabetes and using tobacco products.

But typically, people younger than

30 aren't as prone to gum disease. "The rule of thumb is you don't start talking about periodontal disease until after the age of 35," Beck said.

Natalie Turner, a junior journalism major, was not surprised by the study's findings. But she said she does not believe the data will change people's habits.

"I don't think people think about gum disease until they actually have it," Turner said.

Eric Smith, a health educator with Campus Health Services' substance abuse prevention program, said marijuana use can affect a student's memory retention and problem-solving abilities.

"It's not just the impact on your health, but also it's the effects on your life as a student," Smith said. "From the academic perspective, the effect marijuana can have on your brain is huge."

The study started more than 30 years ago when Dr. W. Murray Thomson, professor of dental public health at the University of Otago in New Zealand, began following participants born between 1972

and 1973. The participants reported on their cannabis and tobacco use four times between the ages of 18 and 32 and were examined for signs of dental disease at ages 26 and 32.

"They're pretty trustful of these investigators, and they would probably get a valid response," Beck said. "It's one of the few studies that would have information like that."

Addiction varies by person and depends on frequency of use.

"Long-term marijuana abuse can lead to addictions," Smith said.

In 2000, the rate of marijuana usage among college students was 33.6 percent, a 9 percent increase from 1990.

Students interested in quitting should consider meeting with health professionals at Counseling and Wellness Services, Smith said.

"Much like smoking, cold turkey might not be the best way to go," he said. "Between the health and legal reasons, that should be good motivation to quit."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

VINCE VAUGHN

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Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

Maniscalco was recommended to be on Vaughn's tour by a mutual friend, Ahmed Ahmed, who is also one of the comedians featured in the film.

"Getting on the tour was a dream come true for me," said Maniscalco, who has been a fan of Vaughn's work since watching the comic's performance in "Swingers."

"You felt like a rock star. It was like traveling with Elvis Presley."

Maniscalco said all of the featured comedians' styles of comedy are different and describes his own material as observational sketches that comment on what people are doing in contemporary society.

"I could have done 60 days, it was that great. Being on this tour dwarfed any kinds of complaints you might have," Maniscalco said.

"It was a little ambitious, 30 shows, 30 nights, but I'm proud of the film and what we've done."

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DONATIONS

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short of its \$1.5 million goal, said Nitin Sekar, another MVP co-coordinator at UNC.

Snider said the campaign is hoping to be finished with its fundraising efforts by the end of this academic year.

"It's about students coming together that can show enthusiasm and inspire donors to match the enthusiasm with the money that students don't have," he said.

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TUITION

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plans to speak to board members about the need for a clearer policy toward out-of-state tuition, one that would allow families to plan in advance for tuition increases.

"We want to make sure predictability and accountability are still important parts of the conversation," she said.

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LILES

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"He's got a much larger campaign than I did," Matt Liles said. "I tried to do a lot of it myself."

He said Logan maintains his light-hearted personality under pressure, citing Logan's participation in an earlier competitive endeavor, WRAL's Brain Game, a quiz-bowl style game show for high schoolers.

Matt Liles had introduced Logan to Frank Sinatra on the way to the competition, and after correctly responding to several consecutive history questions, Logan got a question about Sinatra.

He hit the buzzer, looked into the audience and locked eyes with Matt. Then he winked, and answered the question correctly.

"When it comes to being who we are, I think Logan has the strength to be him," Matt Liles said.

Matt stopped short of endorsing his brother because of his position on the Student Supreme Court, but said that he answered Logan's questions about running.

"I said he was crazy. Running takes a lot out of you, but there's nothing more exhilarating than going around to students and groups and finding out what they care about."

Friends said Logan Liles' campaign is exciting, noting his personal approach.

"He was definitely personable and hard-working," said Anthony Palermo, a junior who served on the Carolina Advocacy committee with Liles last year. "Those two don't necessarily go hand-in-hand and for him it worked really well."

Liles has cultivated "grass-roots-oriented" interests, such as his environmental emphasis, said Frank Sturges, Liles' friend and current campaign adviser.

Sturges was the chairman for the Carolina Advocacy committee last year, for which Liles also served as vice chairman. The committee is a student government effort to influence state legislators on behalf of UNC.

Liles has put together a platform with a personal impact at every turn, from Pit office hours to permanent field space at Carolina North.

"It's about the students," Liles said. "That's not a philosophy, that's how it should be."


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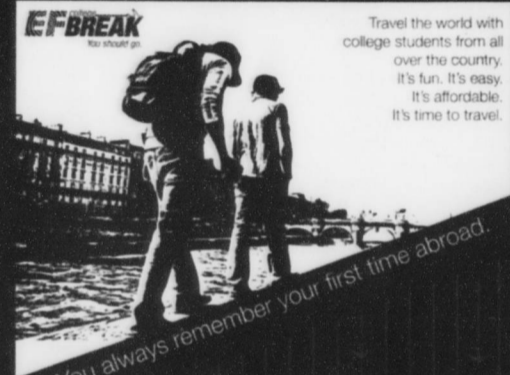
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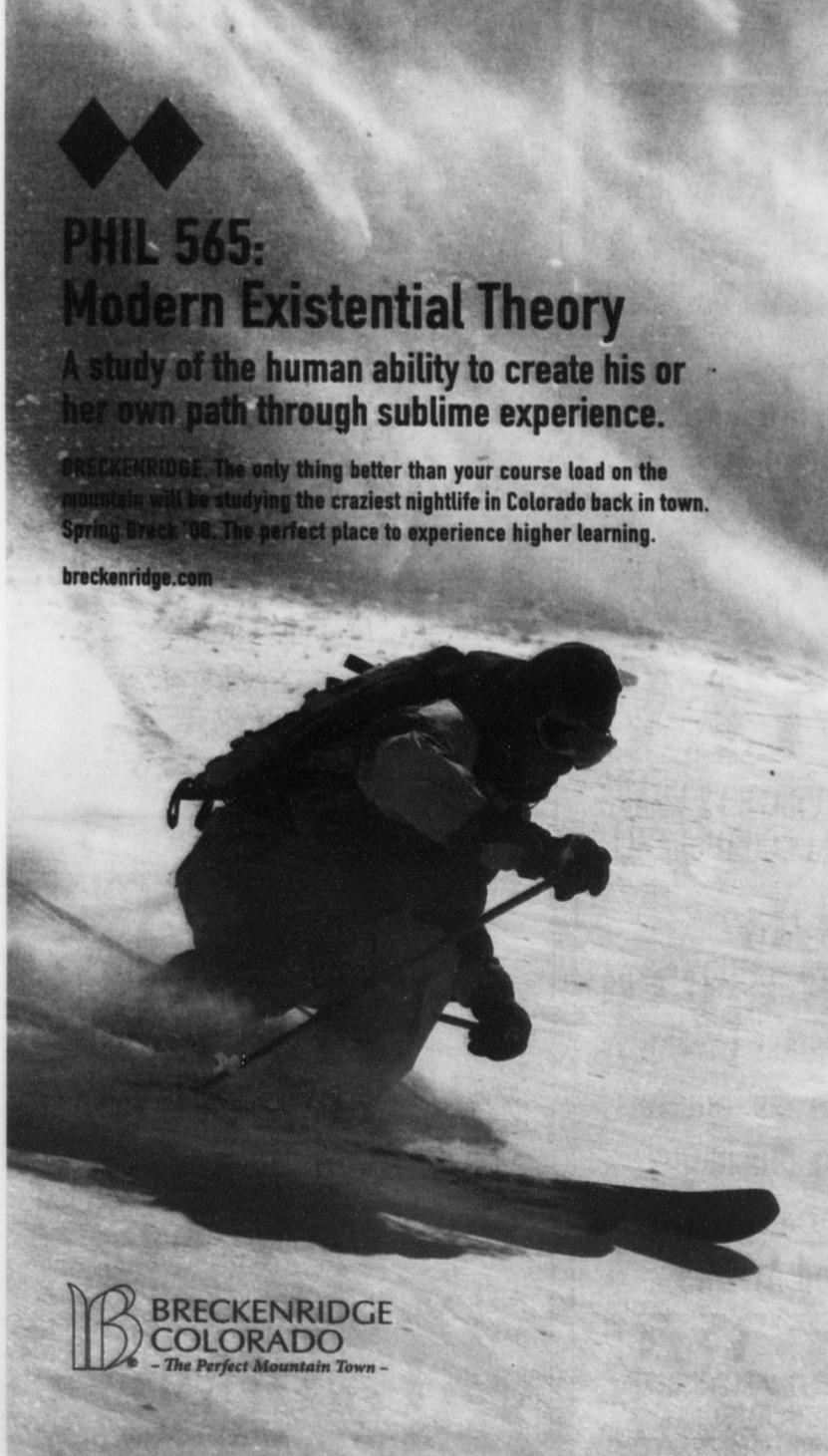


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