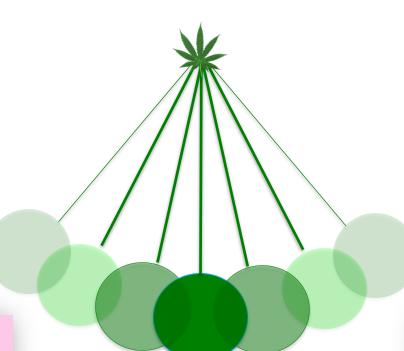


Cannabis

Recreational





- Medicinal

- •No harm
- "healthy", "organic" plant
- Not addictive
- Anxiolytic
- "Wonder drug": can treat numerous conditions/disorders

- Psychopathology
 - Psychosis/schizophrenia
 - Negative affective disorders
- Anxiogenic
- Addiction risk



CANNABIS TODAY

Cannabis contains over 500 chemicals including >140 cannabinoids which have a greater or lesser degree of psycho-pharmaco-activity &

Historic **concentrated**, high **potency** Products; varied **routes** of administration

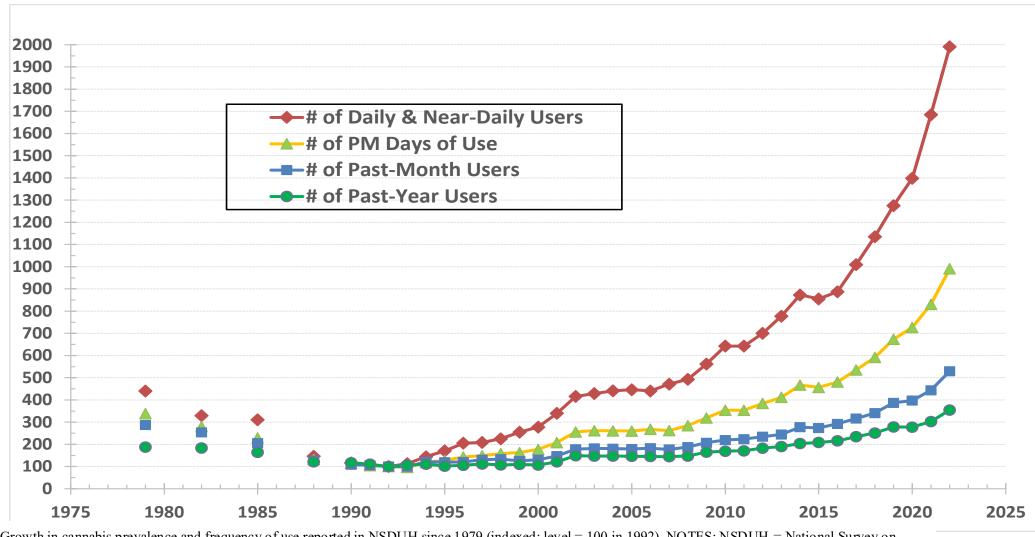
Hemp/CBD Δ^8 -THC other THC analogs (e.g., Δ^{10} -THC and hexahydrocannabinol [HHC])

Tetrahydrocannabiphorol (THC-P) – rare cannabinoid (now synthetically made); extremely potent (>30%) Δ^9 -THC



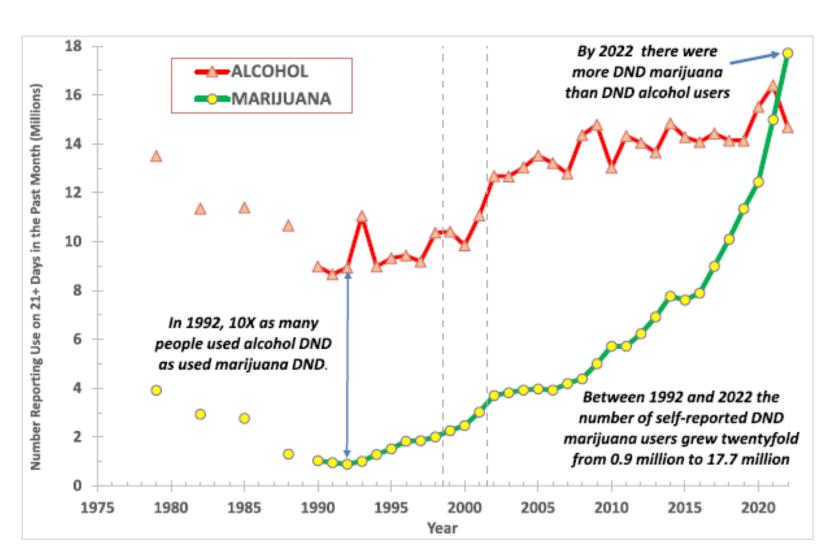
THC/CBD ratio 2021: 52x

Cannabis use increasing



Growth in cannabis prevalence and frequency of use reported in NSDUH since 1979 (indexed: level = 100 in 1992). NOTES: NSDUH = National Survey on Drug Use and Health; PM = past month. SOURCE: Caulkins, 2024.

People using cannabis daily/near daily now exceeds alcohol

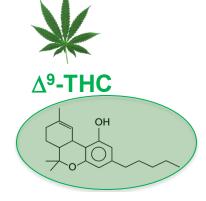


NOTES: Data presented are based on the NSDUH, which underwent methodological changes in 2020 and 2021. NSDUH = National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

SOURCE: Reproduced from Caulkins, 2024.





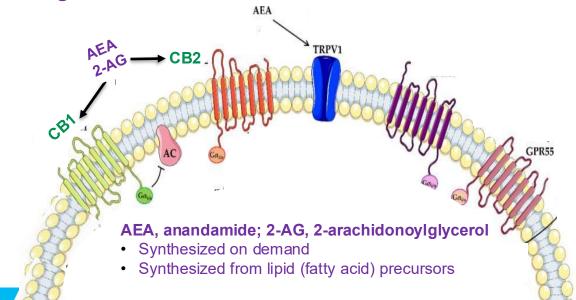


Plant-derived cannabinoids

Relatively Recent Discovery

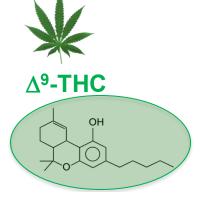
N-arachidonoylethanolamine (anandamide) (AEA) — 1992 2-arachidonoylglycerol (2-AG) — 1995

Endogenous cannabinoids = endocannabinoids





Endogenous cannabinoids = endocannabinoids



Plant-derived cannabinoids



AEA, anandamide; 2-AG, 2-arachidonoylglycerol

- Synthesized on demand
- Synthesized from lipid (fatty acid) precursors



Key Modulator

CB₁

CB2

GPR55

GPR35

GPR19

GPR18

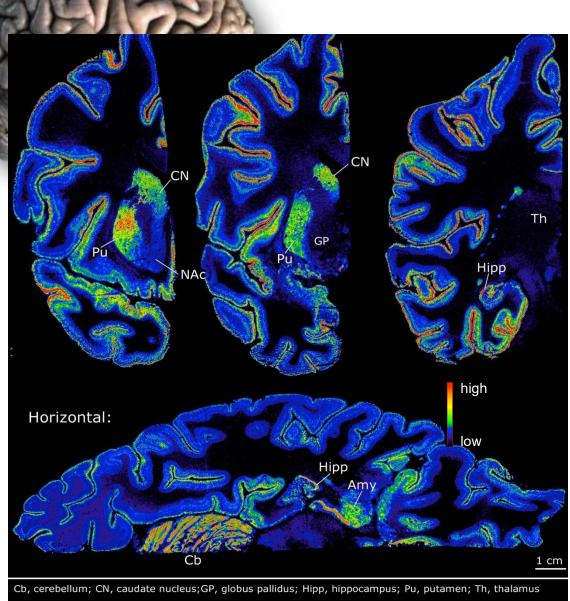
TRPV1, 2

TRPV8

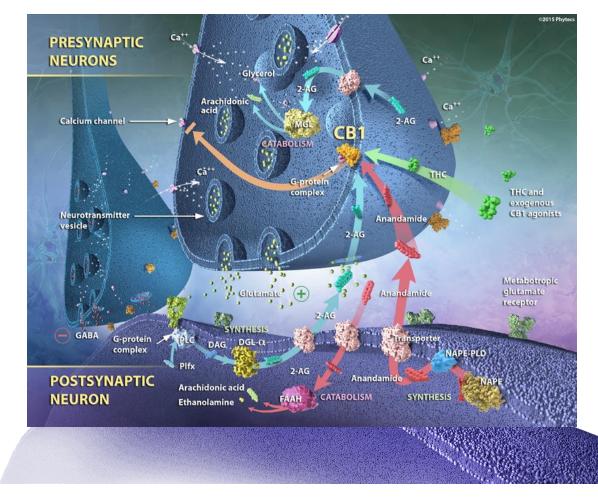
PPAR

AEA 2AG FAAH MAGL PLC DAGL

- Energy metabolism
- Appetite
- Thermoregulation
- Immune function and inflammation
- Neural development
- Learning and memory
- Pain and nociception
- Psychomotor function
- Sleep/wake cycle
- Stress and emotion regulation
- Reproduction



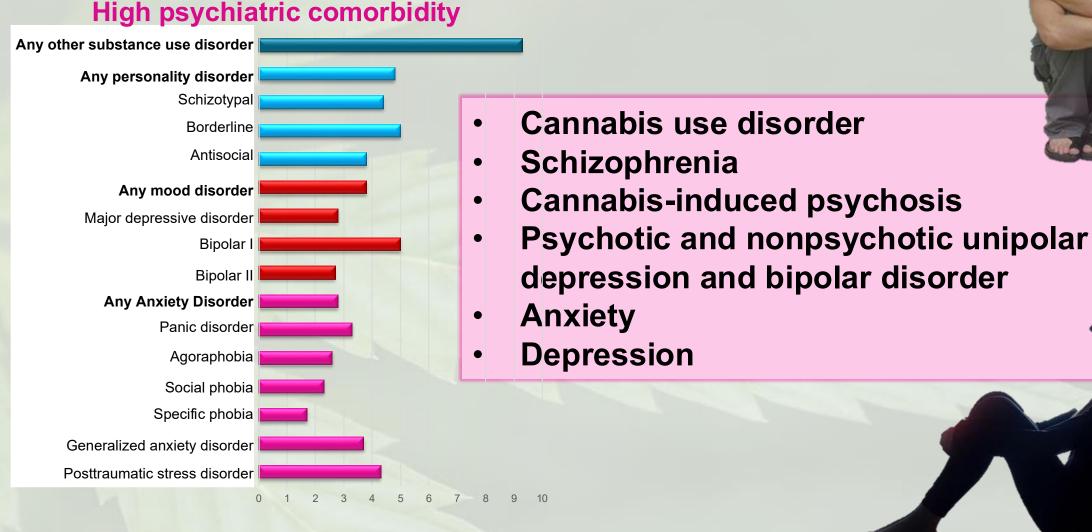
Widely abundant neuromodulatory system: Finetunes synaptic transmission regulating communication between cells



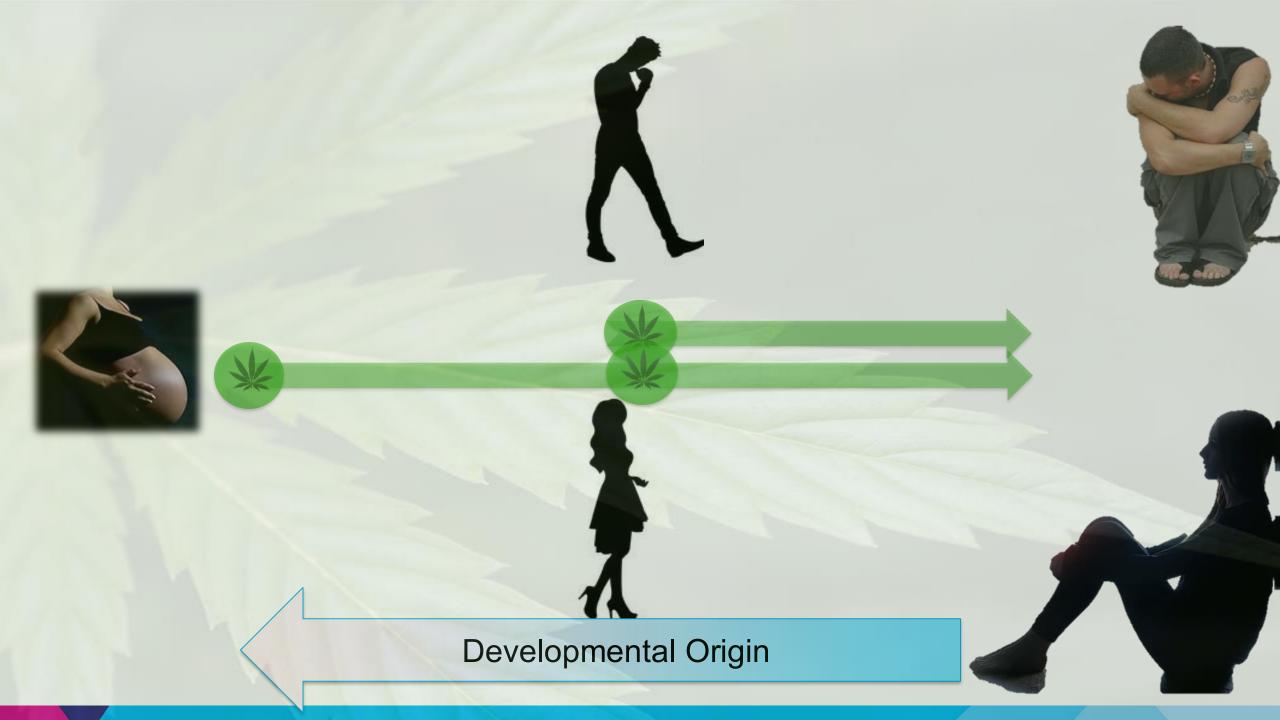
Wang et al, Neuroscience 118:681-694, 2003

Cannabis and Psychiatric Risk

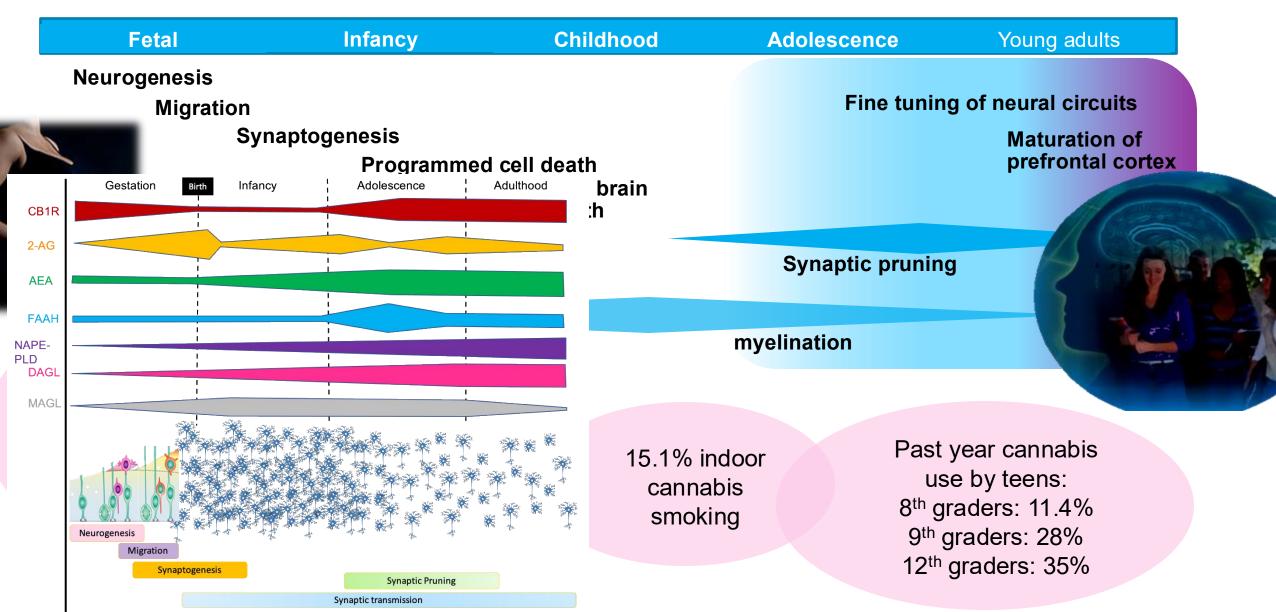
High psychiatric comorbidity



Estimated past-year diagnosis of cannabis use disorder amongst cannabis users is approximately 30%

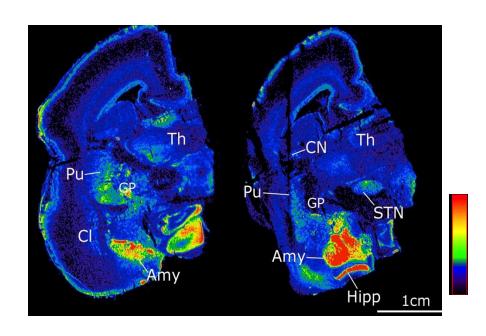


Endocannabinoid System – Critical Role in Neurodevelopmental Processes



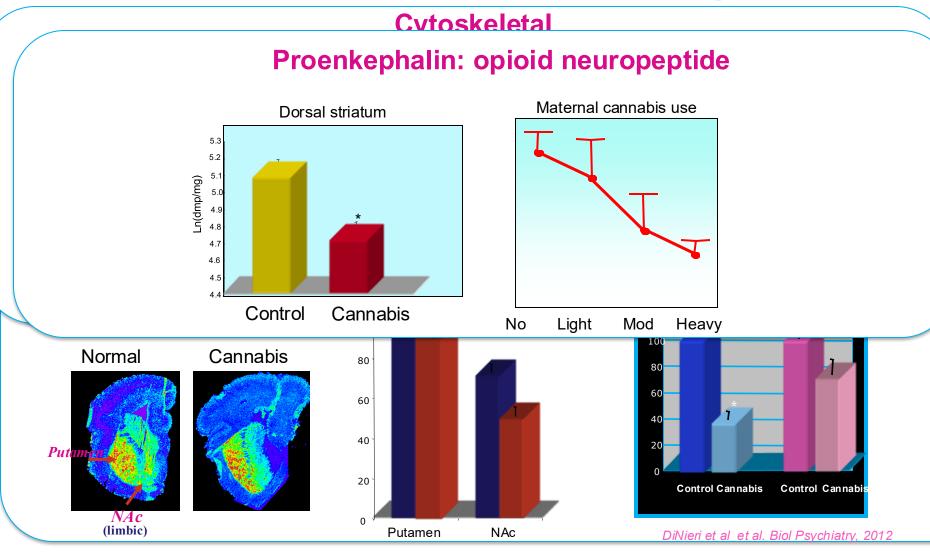
The Endocannabinoid System and Neurodevelopment

CB₁R mRNA Expression in the Human Fetal Brain





Molecular Dysregulation in the Human Fetal Brain Associated with *In Utero* Cannabis Exposure

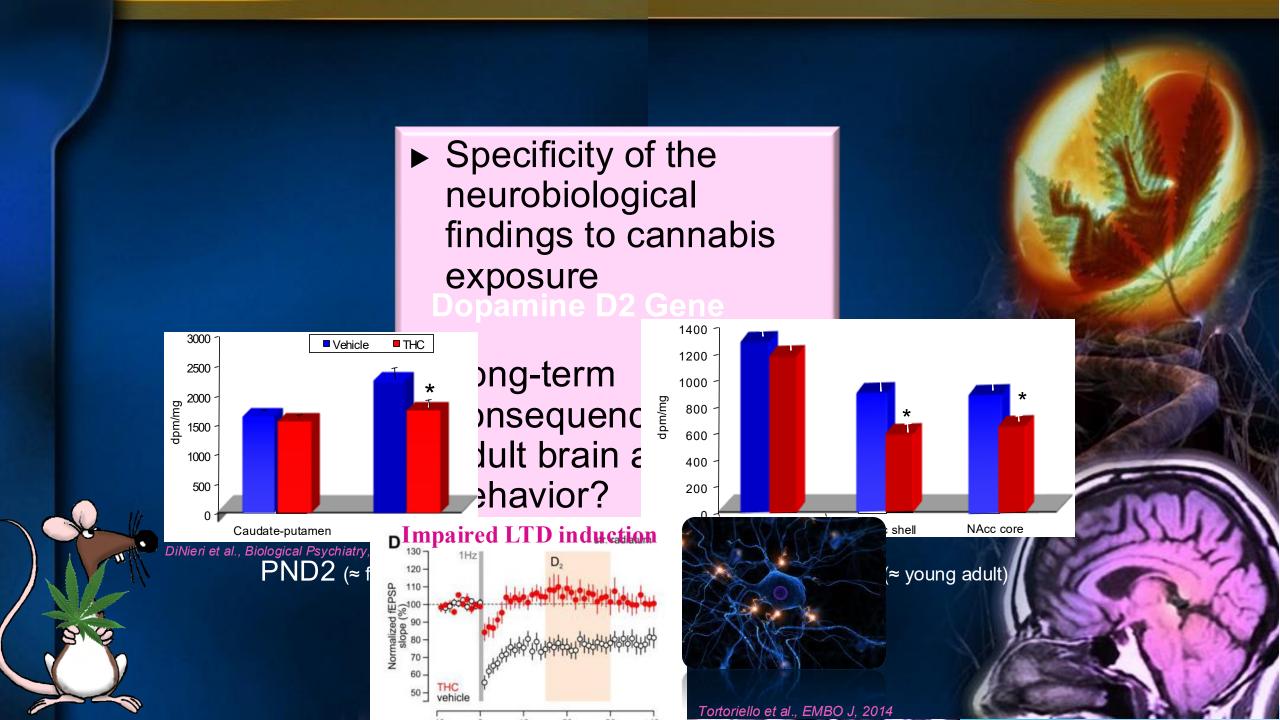


Cytoskeleton: a structure that helps cells maintain their shape and internal

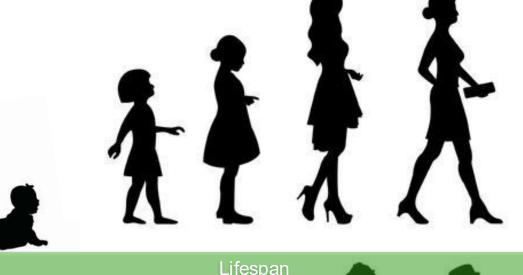
Opioid neuropeptides (enkephalin): play a

Dopamine:

mediates reward, goal-mediated behavior, learning, attention, memory, motor function ...









Yoko Nomura

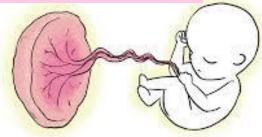
Stress (and Cannabis) in Pregnancy Project



Placenta – The "Third Brain"

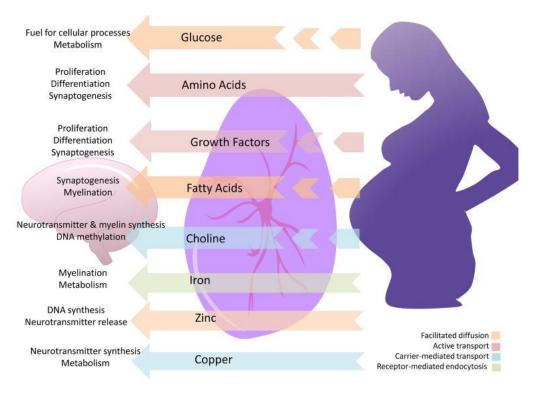
-Link between the fetal and maternal brains Does Cannabis Impact Placental Environment?







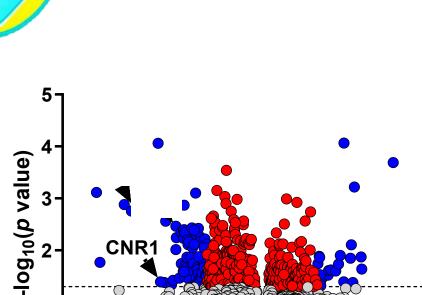
Placenta support fetal neurodevelopment



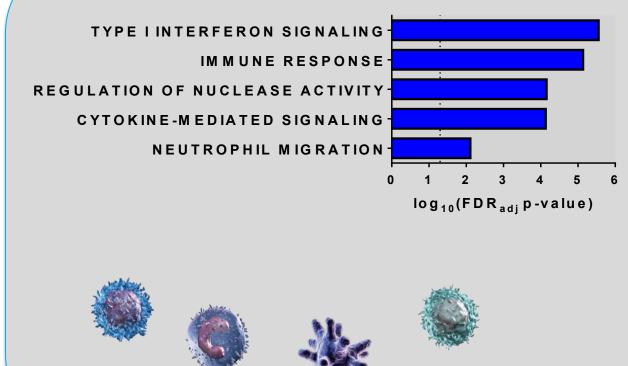
Placental programming is essential for neurodevelopment and aberration linked to psychiatric risk



Dysregulation of Immune Gene Expression in Placenta With Maternal Cannabis Use



log₂ Fold Change (mCB v. non-CB)

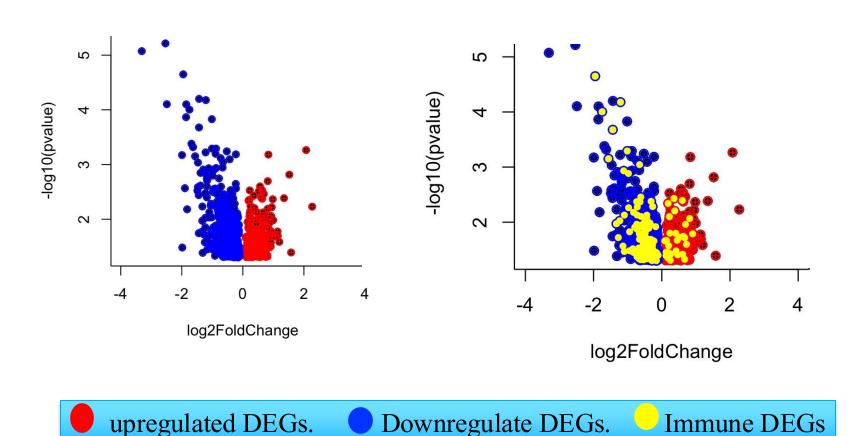


CNR1 = cannabinoid receptor type 1

Includes several proinflammatory cytokine/chemokines (IL1B, CXCL8, CCL2) and enrichment for key immune function ontology such as type I interferon pathway, cytokine-mediated signaling, and neutrophil migration



Differentially Expressed Genes in the Placenta Associated with Cannabis Use

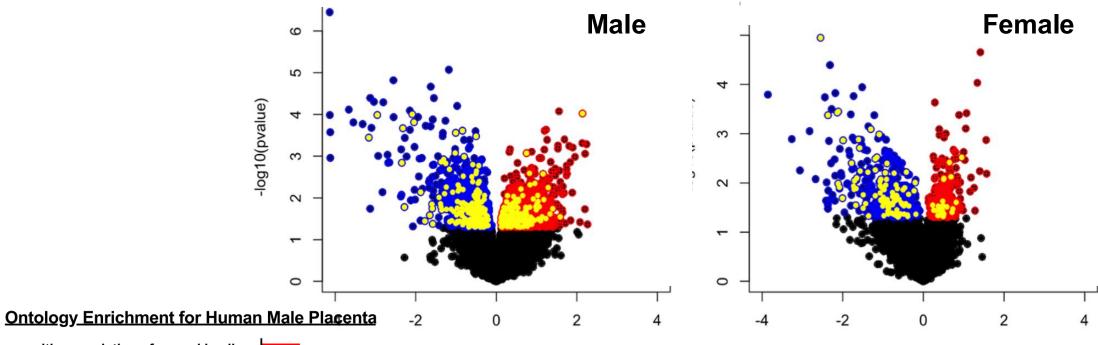


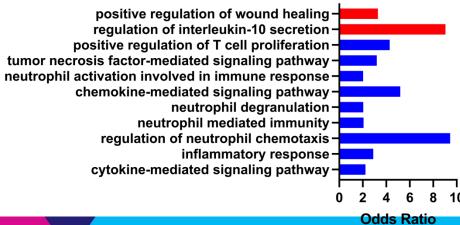
Anissa Bara

Teesta Naskar



Human Placenta — Sex Differences with Cannabis Exposure





Immune-related DEGs

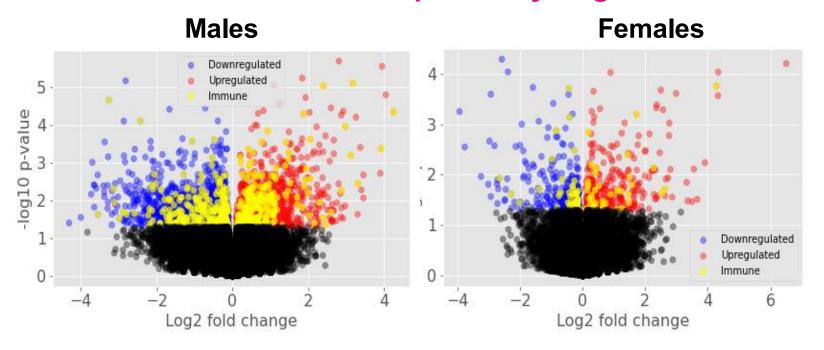
Translational Animal Model: Cannabinoid Exposure To Pregnant Dams

Anissa Bara

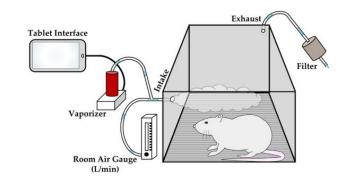


Teesta Naskar

Immune Transcriptome Dysregulation

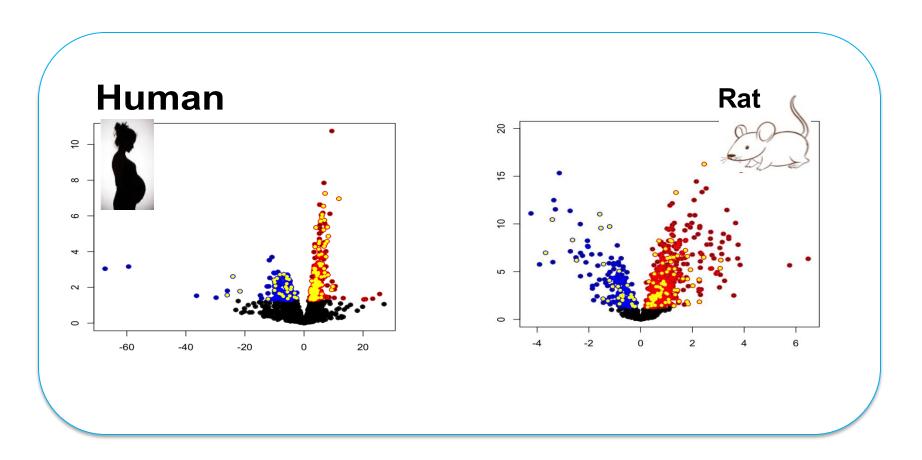






Translational vapor rat model of prenatal cannabis (THC + CBD; 10:1) exposure

Translational Animal Model: THC Exposure To Pregnant Dams Alters the Placental Immune Proteome



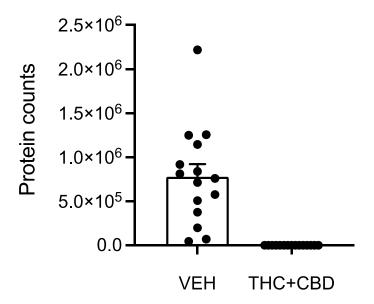


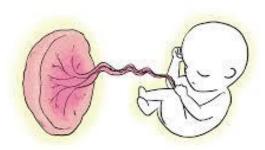




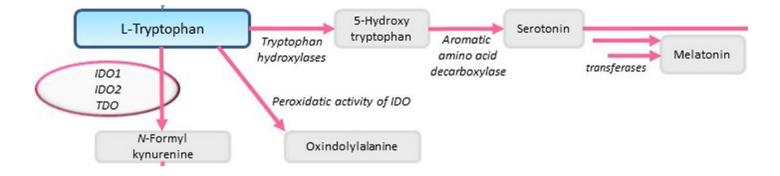


ID01





Placental Proteome

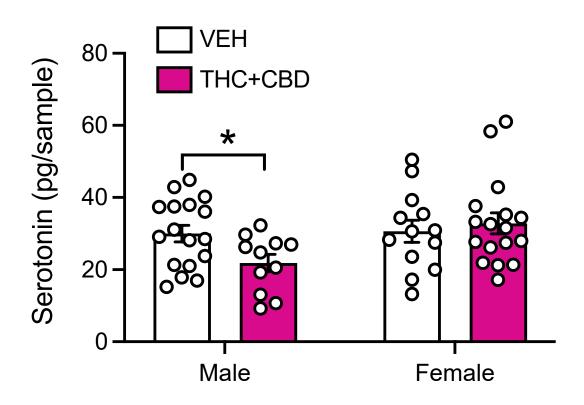


IDO1 (indoleamine 2,3-dioxygenase)

- Catalyzes the degradation of L-Tryptophan, the precursor of Serotonin and downstream to Melatonin
- Rate-limiting step of catabolism along the Kynurenine pathway
- Crucial for survival
- Produced by cells in responses of inflammation
- Crucial for Immune Suppression and Autoimmunity (protects the fetus from maternal immune rejection)
- Role in placental vascular development (formation of new placental vessels!)

Prenatal Cannabinoid Exposure Decreases Placental Serotonin Levels in Males

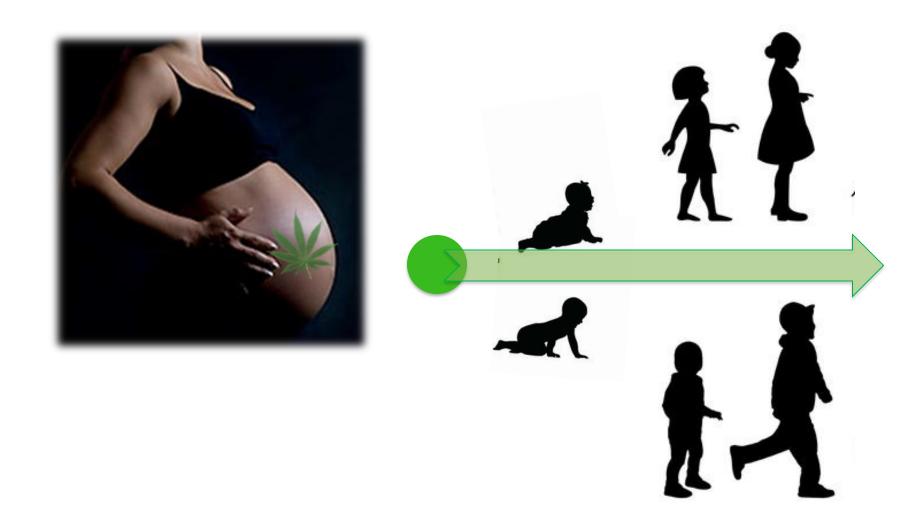
Serotonin





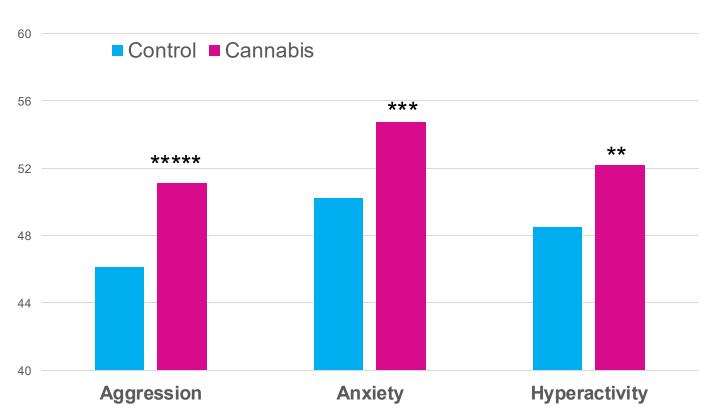
Yoko Nomura

Prenatal Environment Influences Future Phenotype?



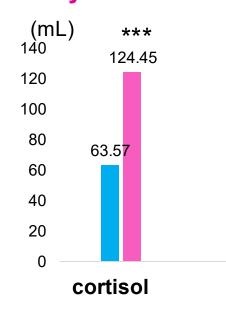
Maternal Cannabis Use in Relation to Hair Steroid Hormones And Clinical Behavior Scores in Early Childhood

Significant Clinical Behavioral Scores at age 4



Behavioral assessment system for children (BASC-2) survey

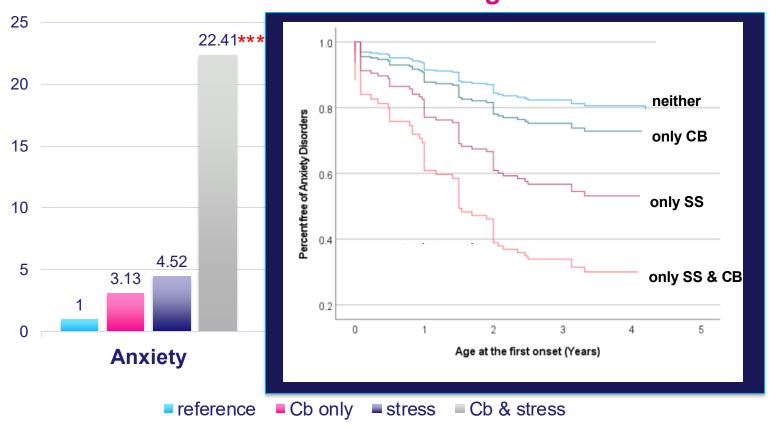
Steroid hormone: 3-4 years old





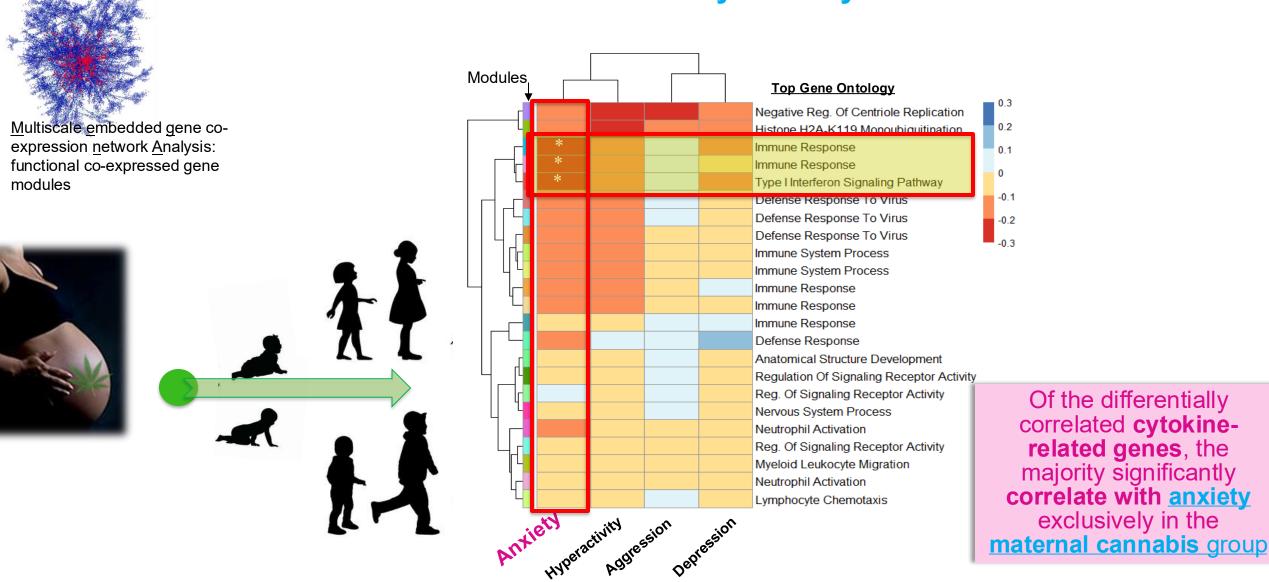
Prenatal Cannabis Exposure and Stress Synergistic Interaction

Risk (adjusted odds ratio) of clinically significant behavioral differences at age 4



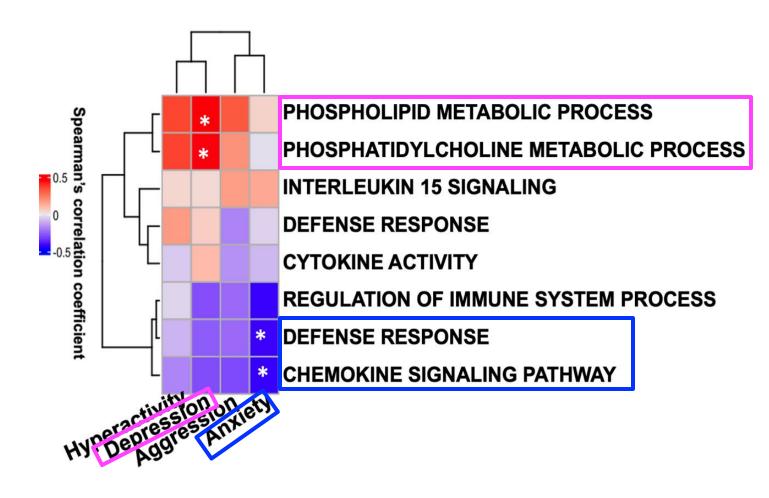


Reprogramming of Immune-Related Placental Gene Networks are Associated With At-Risk Anxiety in Early Childhood





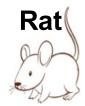
Immune-Related Placental Gene Networks are Associated with At-Risk Anxiety in Early Childhood

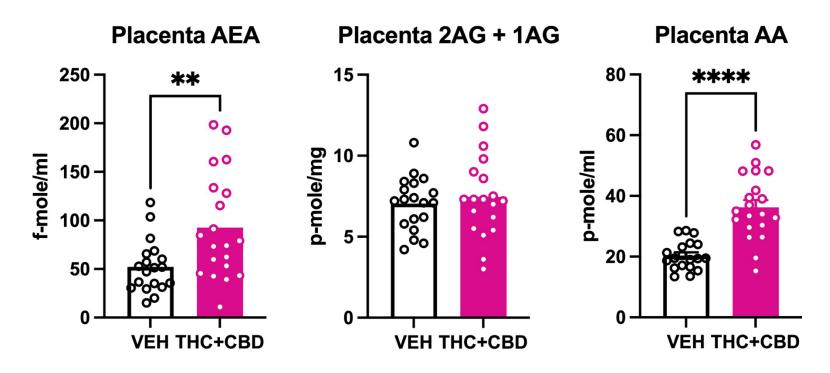


Lipid processing: energy storage, signaling, and structural components of cell membranes



THC/CBD Exposure To Pregnant Dams Alters the Placental Endocannabinoids





AEA, anandamide 2-AG, 2-arachidonoylglycerol; DAGL, diacylglycerol lipase – produce 2-AG AA, Arachidonic acid

Arachiodonic acid — **substrate** for both AEA and 2-AG synthesis and AA is recycled during endocannabinoid **catabolism**.

AA also acts as a shared substrate for the eicosanoid system, which produces prostaglandins.

















Pregnancy Infancy Adolescence Adulthood



Behavioral changes:
Affective behavior

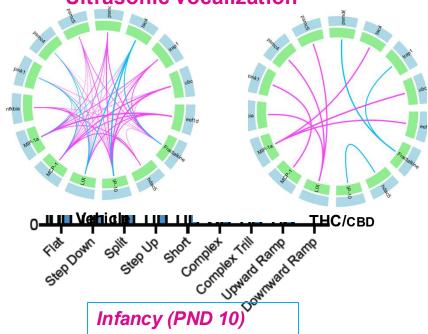
Behavioral changes:
Affective behavior
Social interaction

Behavioral changes:
Motivation
Depression-like phenotype

Stress sensitivity
Opioid sensitivity

Prenatal Cannabinoid Effects on Juvenile Affect and Social Behaviors

NF-kB gene expression (accumbens) and circulating cytokine levels Ultrasonic vocalization



- Isolation-induced Ultrasonic Volcalizations
- Social communication
- Communicative role in mother-offspring interactions
- Peak at PND10 in rats

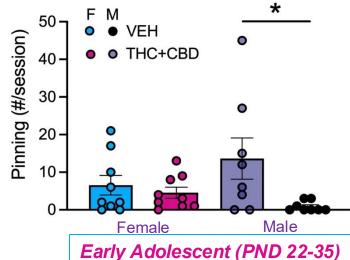


Anissa Bara



Loredana Losapio

Social play



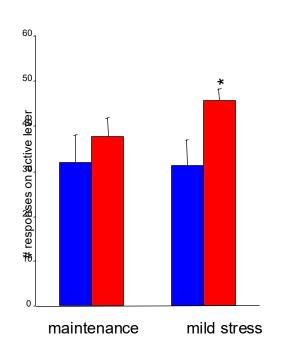


Prenatal THC Exposure Alters Sensitivity to Opioids in Adulthood

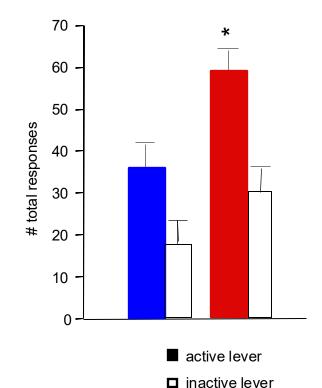


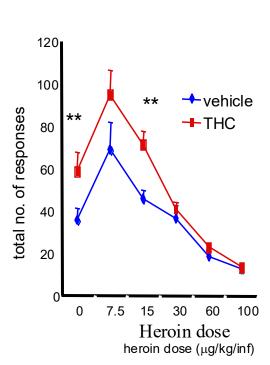
vehicle THC

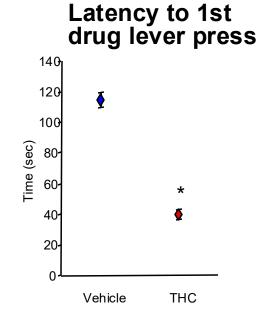
Drug intake – mild stress



Drug-seeking behavior







Spano et al, Biological Psychiatry, 61:554-63, 2007

Long-Term Consequences of Prenatal THC Exposure: Adulthood

Reward: chocolate



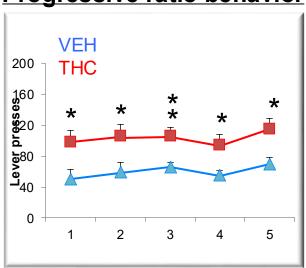
Forced Swim Test
Behavioral despair model





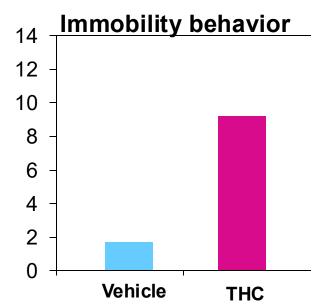
Motivation

Progressive ratio behavior

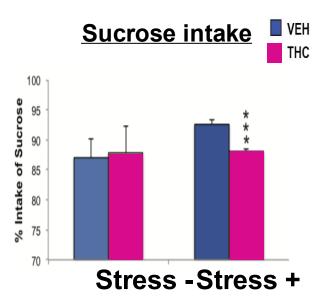


Increased breakpoint = increased motivation

Depression-like phenotype



Hedonic state



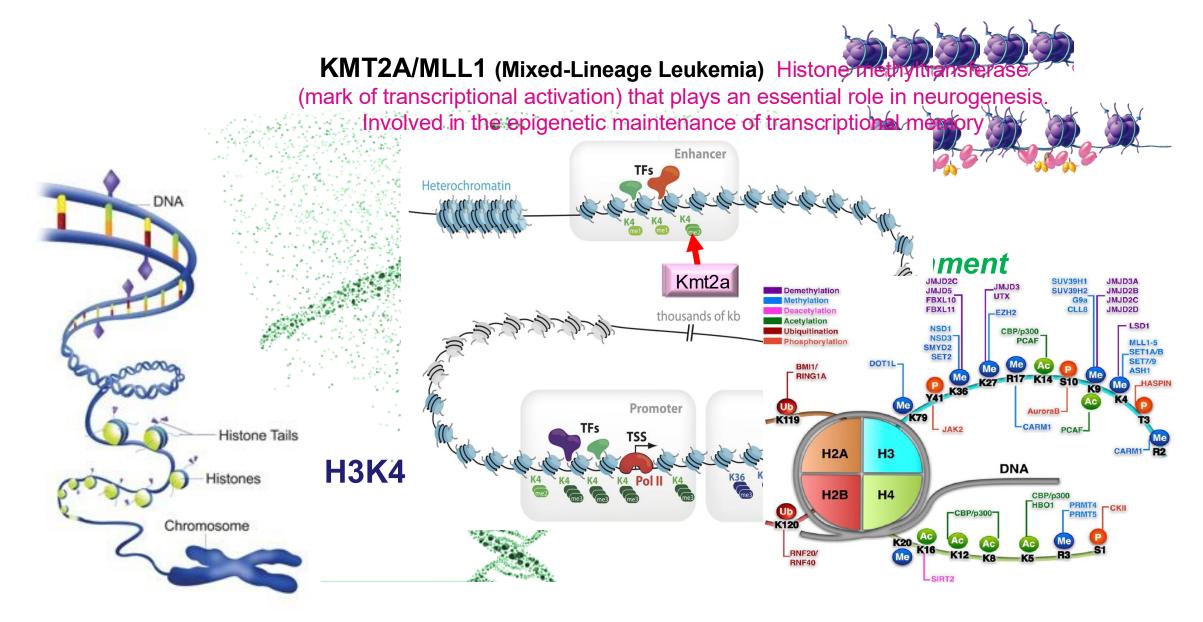
Underlying Mechanisms that Maintain *In Utero* Experiences Across Life?



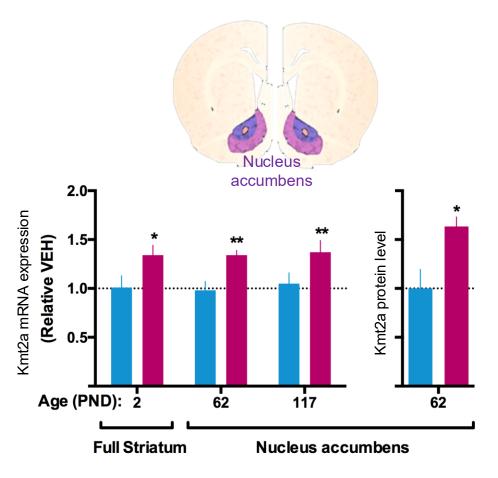


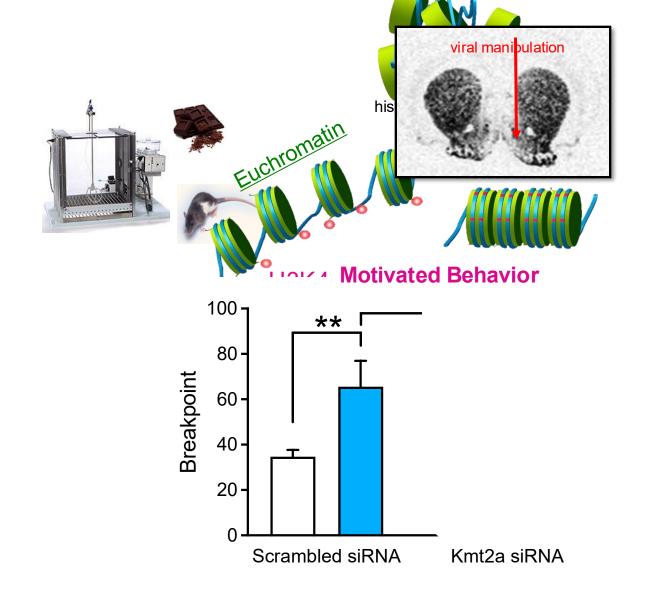


Epigenetic Mechanisms?



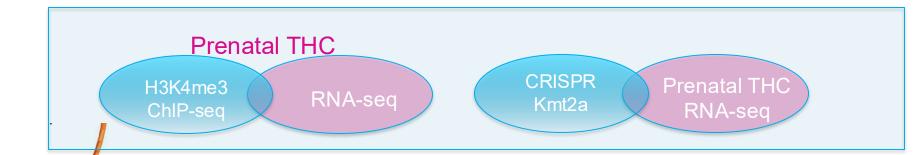
Epigenetic (Kmt2a) Perturbation Causally Contributes to Protracted Behavioral Effects in Adulthood due to Prenatal THC Exposure

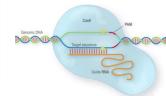


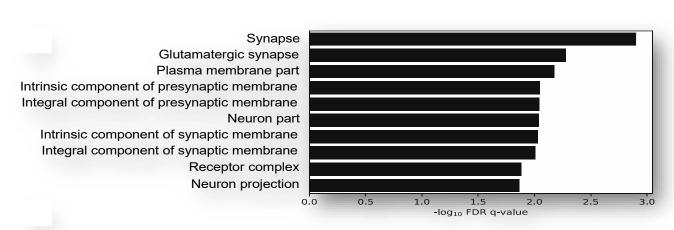




Gene Networks Associated with Kmt2a/H3K4me4 Epigenetic Alterations and Impacted by Prenatal THC in Adulthood Relate to Synaptic Plasticity





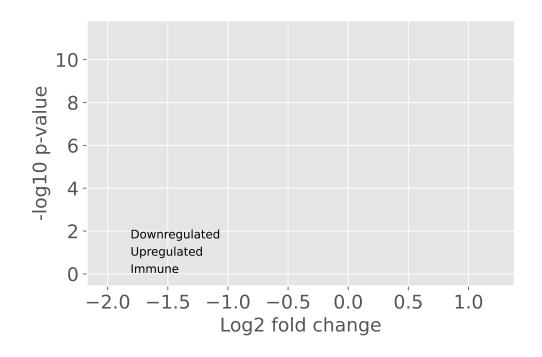


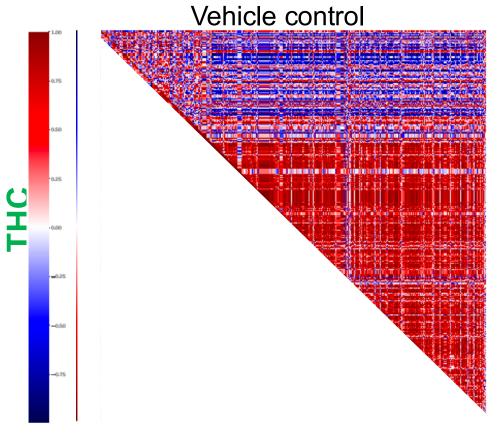


transcriptome

Kmt2a

Reorganization of Epigenetic Enrichment of Immune-Related Gene Loci in the Nucleus Accumbens of Adults with Prenatal THC Exposure





highly synchronized, positive correlations among immune-related gene loci

ADOLESCENCE

~90% of adults with substance use disorders initiate use during adolescence

hildhood

brain

Adolescence

Young adults

Migration

Synaptogenesis

Adolescent cannabis use is a critical window for Cannabis Use Disorder risk

Fine tuning of neural circuits

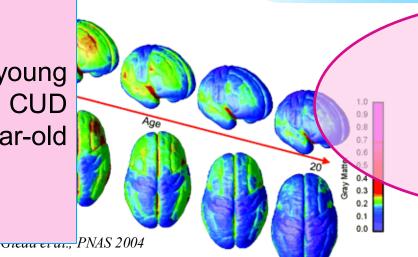
Maturation of prefrontal cortex

Youth and Young Adults:

- Among individuals who used cannabis, 22% met criteria for Cannabis Use Disorder (CUD).
- CUD was most prevalent in young adults, with the highest risk of CUD (41.1%) among the cohort of 21-year-old emerging adults.

Leung et al., Addict Behav. 2020

Synaptic pruning



myelination

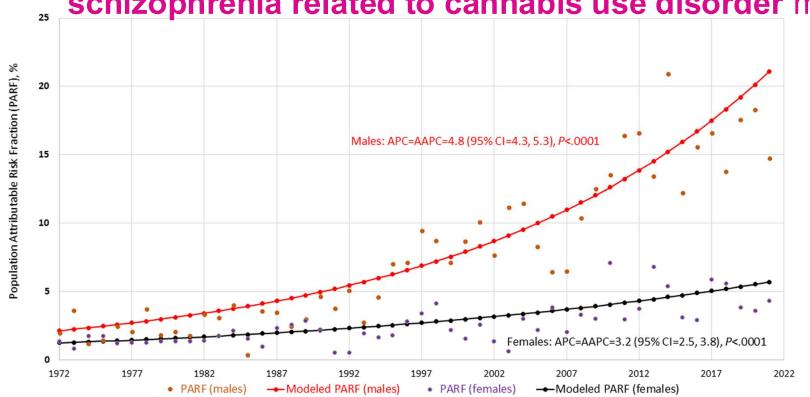
Past year cannabis use by teens:

8th graders: 11.4% 9th graders: 28%

12th graders: 35%

Association Between Cannabis Use Disorder and Schizophrenia: Sex and Age

For young men aged 21-30, the proportion of preventable cases of schizophrenia related to cannabis use disorder may be as high as 30%



16–20-year-olds: association between CUD and schizophrenia was ~2X as high for males than females

21–25-year-olds: it was approximately 50% higher for males than females

>26 years old: similar for males and females

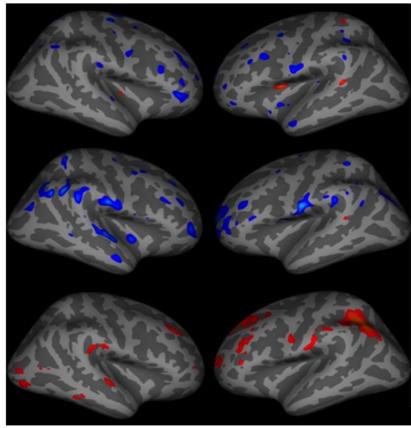
PARF=Population attributable risk fraction. Modeled PARF= PARF results from the selected joinpoint regression model. APC=annual percentage change. AAPC=average APC during 1972-2021. APC=AAPC: Indicate that no joinpoints were identified using Bayesian Information Criterion.

Proportion of cases of schizophrenia associated with cannabis use disorder increased 3- to 4-fold during the past 2 decades

The Prefrontal Cortex and Adolescent Cannabis Use

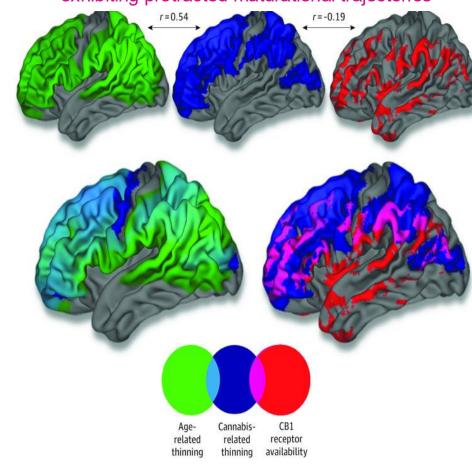
Structurally

- Alters cortical thickness
- Alters grey matter/white matter ratio
- Alters gyrification



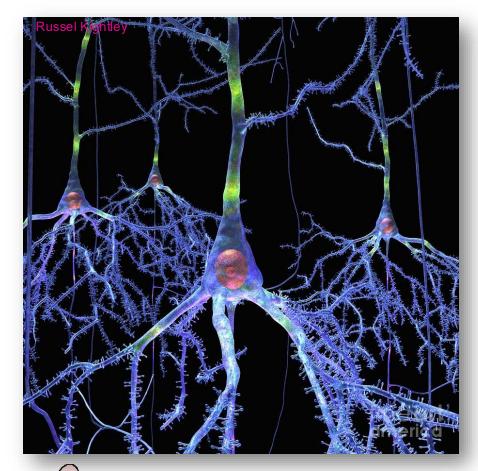
(Filbey et al. 2015; Shollenbarger et al. 2015)

Cannabis use associated with altered cortical development, particularly in prefrontal regions rich in CB1 receptors and exhibiting protracted maturational trajectories



Accelerated cortical thinning correlated with cannabis use and impulsivity

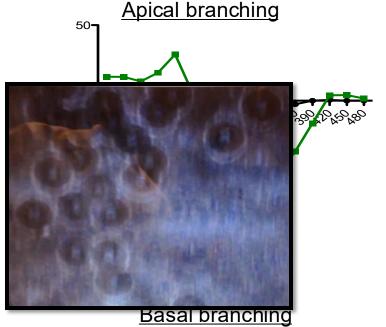
Adolescent THC Exposure: Prefrontal Cortex

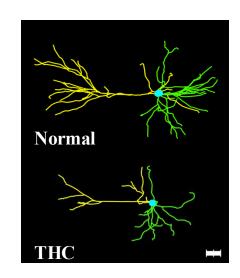


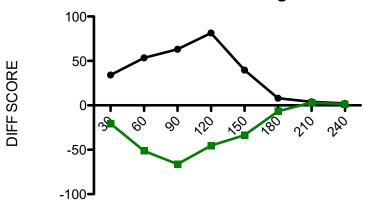
Prelimbic (PrL) region of the Prefrontal Cortex:

- PFC subdivision during adolescence that exhibit the most pronounced developmental pruning and highest rate of spine turnover
- Layer II directly connected with amygdala, mediodorsal thalamus, nucleus accumbens

Reduced Cortical Neuronal Complexity



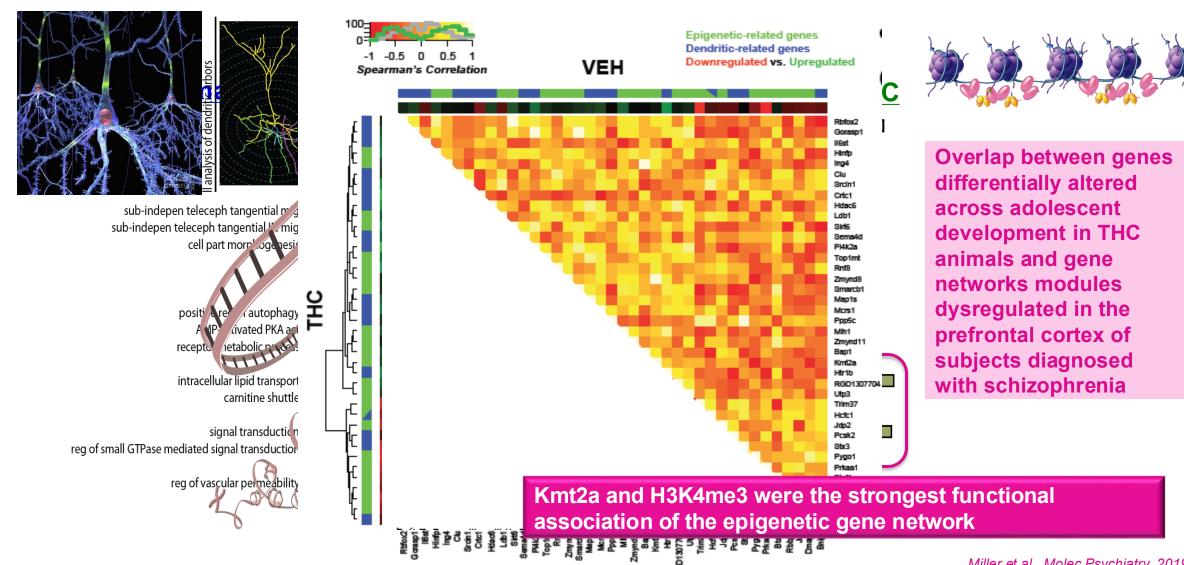


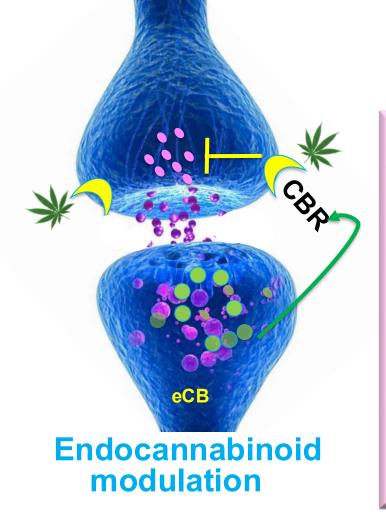


RESEMBLES STRESS
MORPHOLOGICAL
PHENOTYPE in PFC

Adol THC exposure

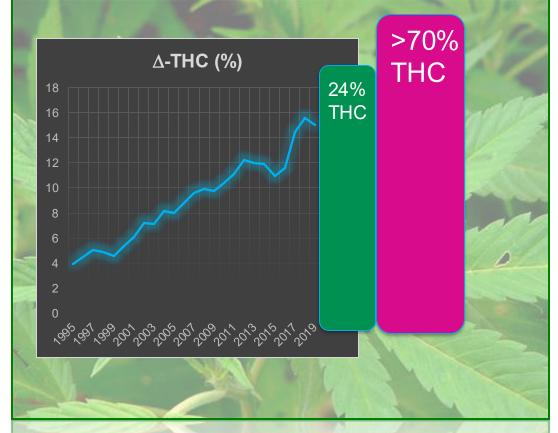
Reprogramming of the Gene Expression Landscape in Pyramidal Cortical Neurons as a Consequence of Adolescent THC Exposure





High-potency cannabis is associated with a greater risk of psychotic symptoms, depression, anxiety, and cannabis use disorder.

Adolescents only partially titrate their use of high-potency cannabis, which can result in the consumption of high concentrations of THC



High Potency △9-THC
high-THC (low-CBD) cannabis is preferred
for recreational use

eCB

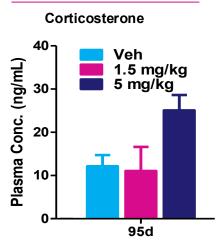
Exogenous cannabinoids

Normal synaptic regulation

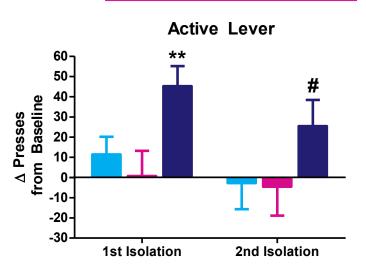
Pathological synaptic regulation

Adolescent THC Alters Stress System and Social Stress Impacts Reward Sensitivity: <u>Dose Matters</u>

Stress hormone

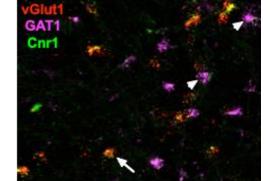


Acute isolation stress



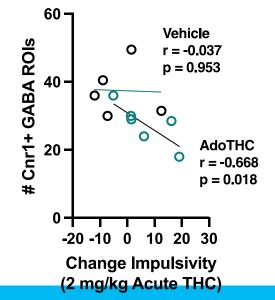


critically implicated in decision making and anxiety/stress



Stress





High dose THC alters cannabinoid receptor number in the amygdala that directly relates to impulsivity

Amygdala molecular disturbances

Cannabis and Decision-Making Behavior

Decision making is a critical cognitive facet implicated in psychopathologies, especially addiction

Decision-making in Human Cannabis Users

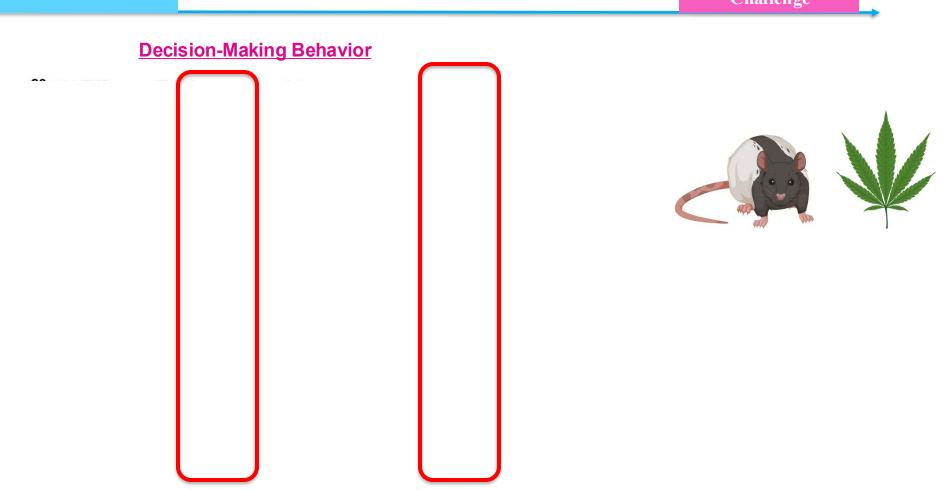


Re-Exposure to THC in Adulthood As a Consequence of Prior Exposure to THC During Adolescence

Adolescent THC exposure

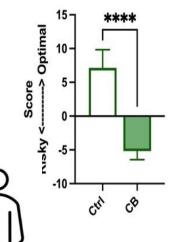
Adult acute THC

Challenge

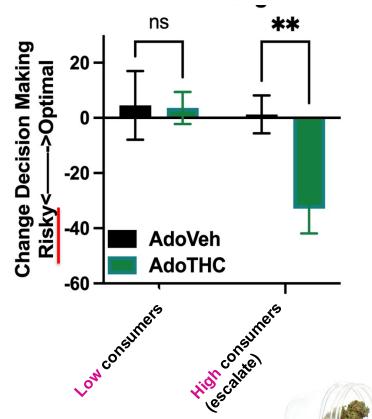


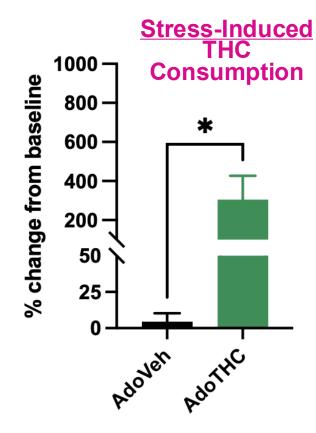
Re-Exposure to THC in Adulthood After Adolescent THC Exposure Self-Administration

Human cannabis use disorder



Edible THC-Induced Decision-Making Deficits



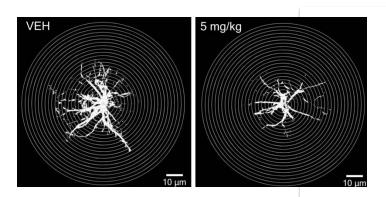


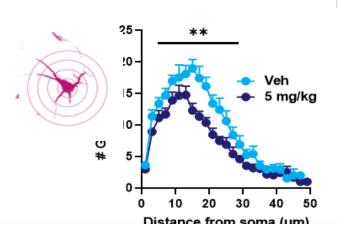


Amygdala

Neurobiological Underpinnings

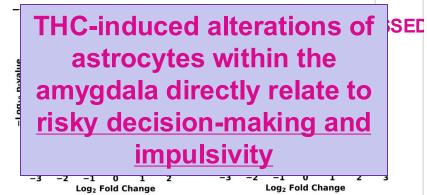
<u>High THC Dose — Stress Sensitivity and Astrocyte-Related Perturbation</u>

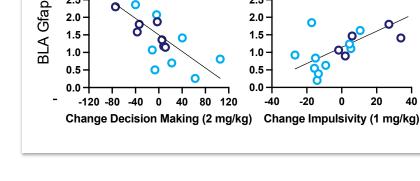




Adult Re-Exposure to THC

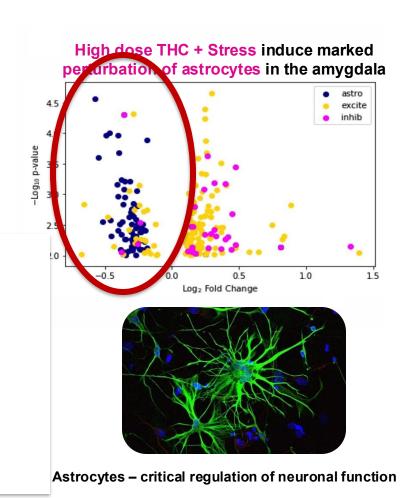
 $4.0 \, \neg r = -0.70$



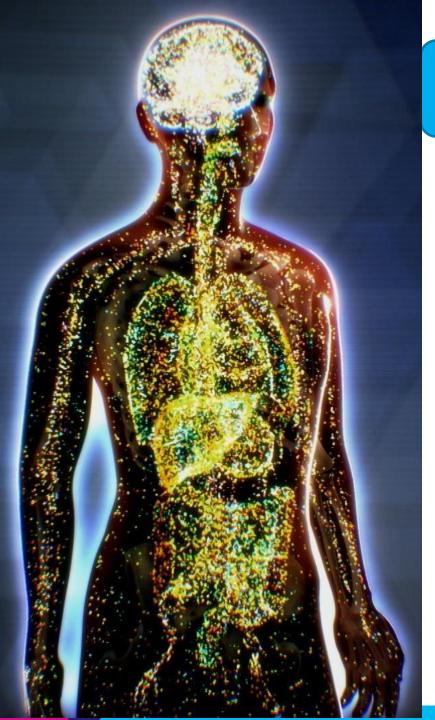


r = -0.64

Stress resulted in ~400% increase in the number of DEGs vs. non-stressed conditions



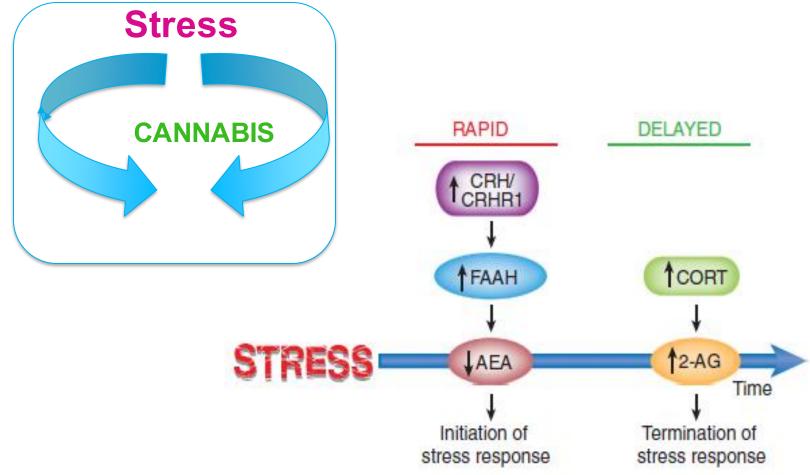
Ferland et al., Molecular Psychiatry, 2023 Ferland et al., JAMA Psychiatry, 2023

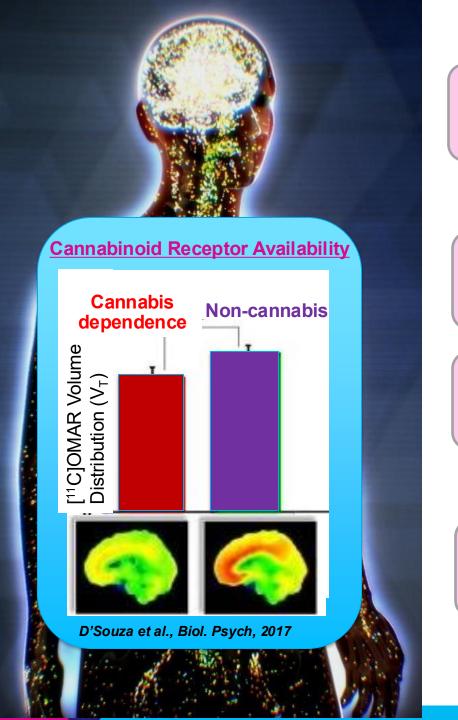


Endocannabinoid System



Inhibit Stress Response





Frequent Cannabis use



Decreased levels of AEA and 2AG

Receptor Down regulation



Poor response to stress

With frequent use of cannabis, there is a loss of the normal inner 'brake'

The plasticity of the developing brain also offers windows of opportunity for prevention and early intervention to change that trajectory



Potency matters

Early use matters

Frequency of use matters

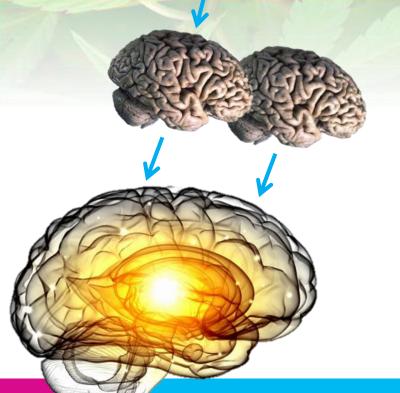
Biological sex matters (but gap closing)

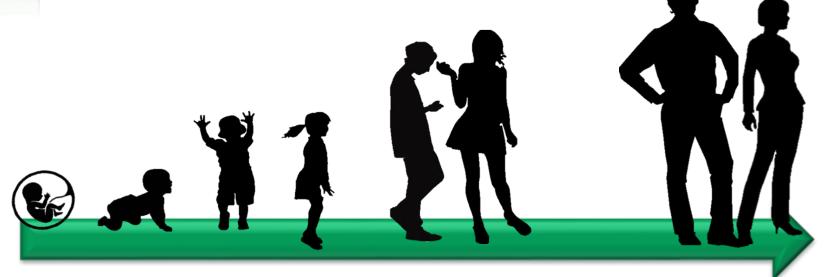
Behavioral traits/psychiatric comorbidity matters

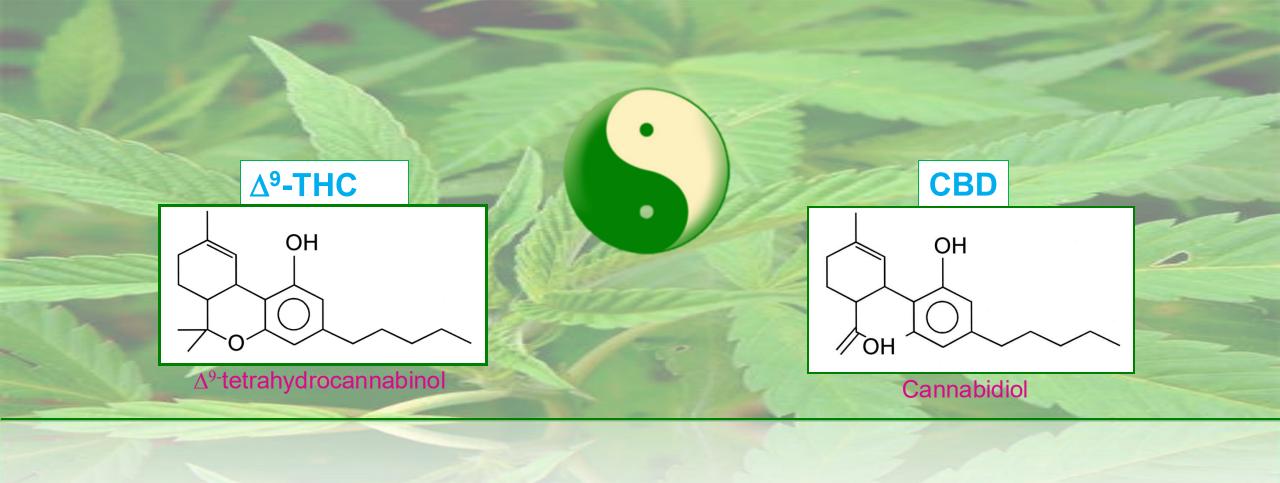
Stress matters

Environment matters

Cannabinoid matters.....





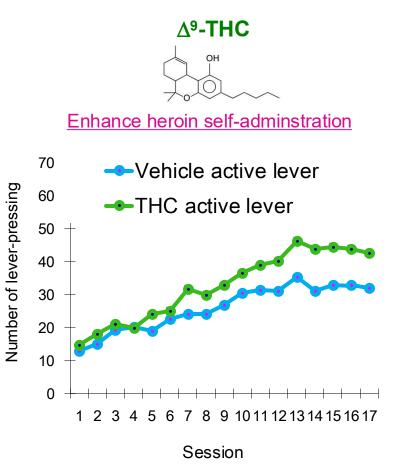


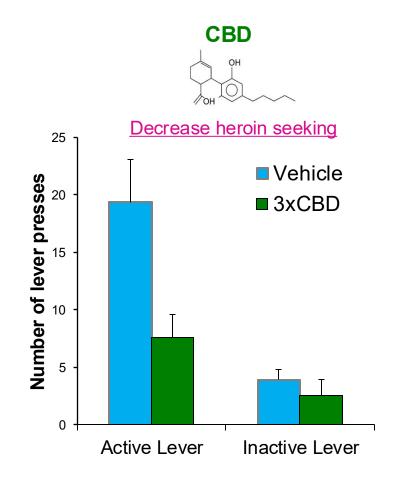
Cannabis contains over 500 chemicals including >140 cannabinoids which have a greater or lesser degree of psycho-pharmaco-activity





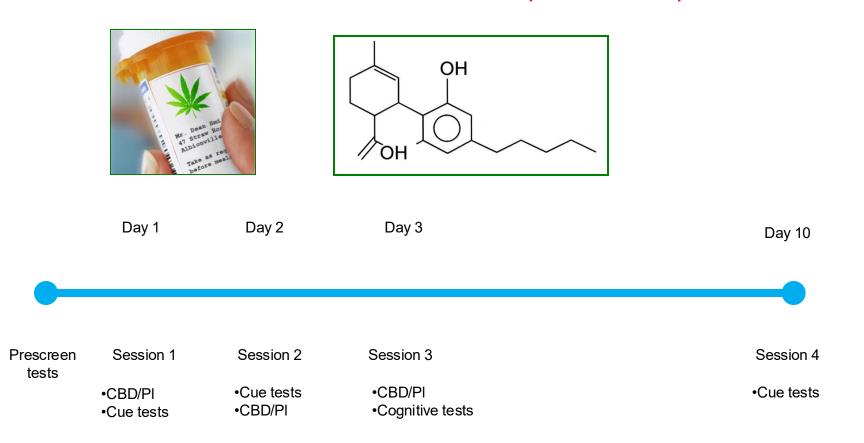
Distinct Effects of THC and CBD On Heroin Vulnerability





Cannabidiol as Potential Treatment Intervention for Opioid Relapse: Double-Blinded Placebo Control Study

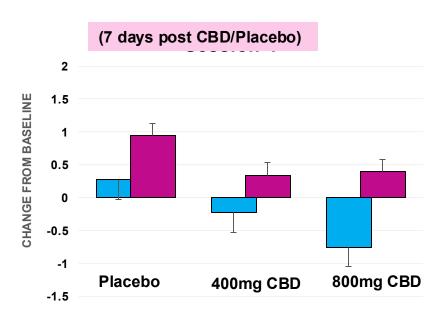
Double-blind, Randomized, Placebo-Controlled: Participants with Opioid Use Disorder



CBD: 400 and 800 mg Placebo

Cue-Induced Effects: Craving VAS-C



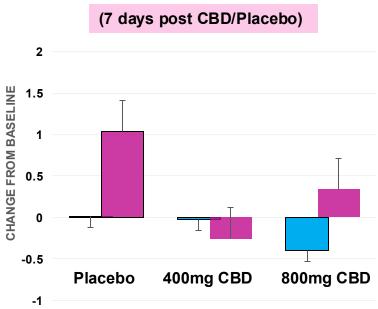


VAS, Visual analog scale

Hurd et al., Am J Psychiatry, 2019

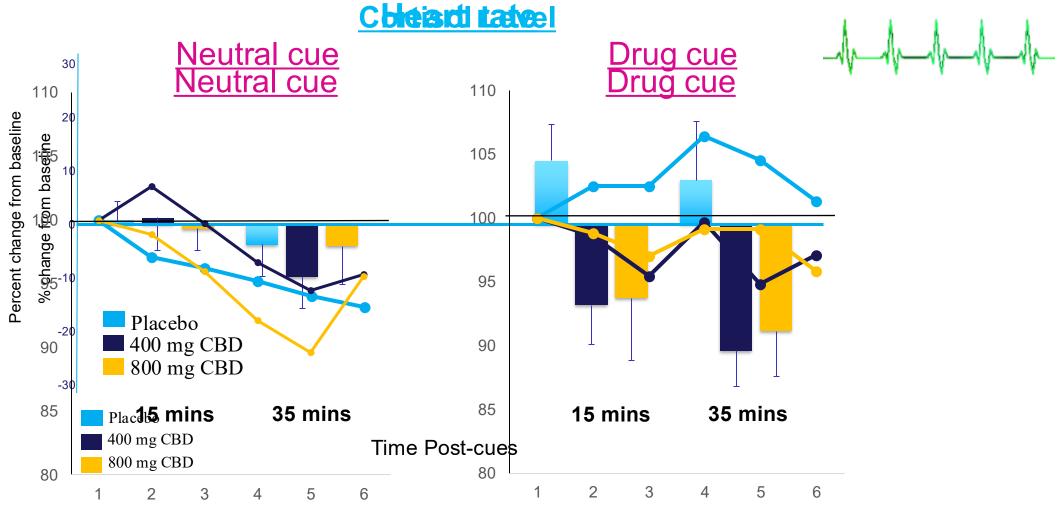
Cue-Induced Effects: Anxiety VAS-A





CBD Reduces Cue-induced Physiological Measures of Stress





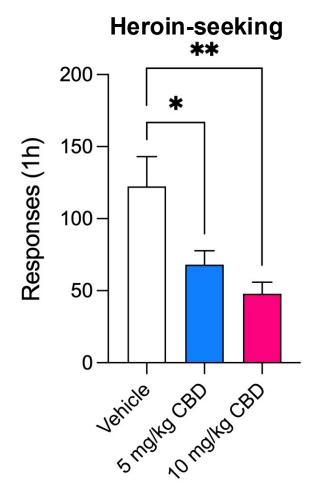


CBD Reduces Cue-Induced Drug-Seeking and Anxiety-like Behavior

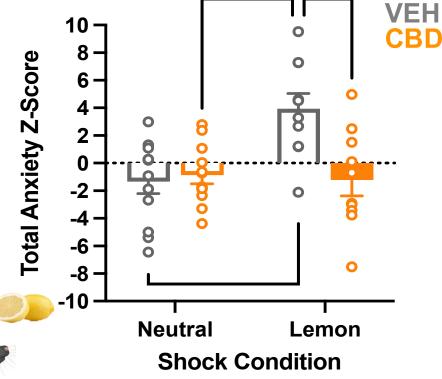
Alex Chisholm

CBD did not affect behavior in animals exposed to neutral cue or encoding of the cue behavioral response.

Jacqueline Ferland
Anxiety-like behavior







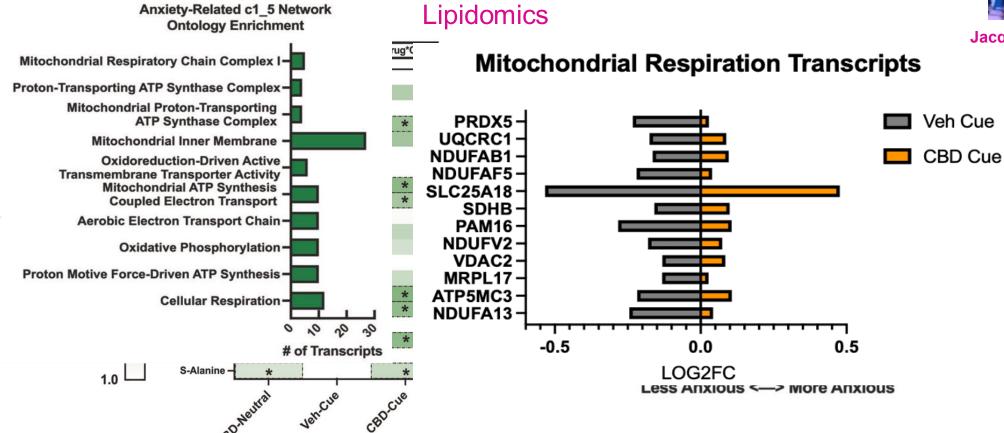


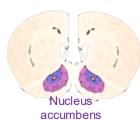
Katie Lynch

CBD Normalizes or Reverses Neural Networks in the Accumbens Altered by Anxiety Phenotypes



Jacqueline Ferland





Gene modules that correlated with anxiety-like behavior involved mitochondria function



accumbens

CBD Normalizes or Reverses Neural Networks in the Accumbens Altered by Heroin-Seeking and Anxiety Phenotypes



Alex Chisholm Jacqueline Ferland **Anxiety Heroin seeking Katie Lynch Anxiety Heroin** Veh Veh **CBD CBD RNA-sequencing** Shared genes/biological processes

Chisholm et al., unpublished Ferland et al., unpublished







Teesta Naskar



Konrad Drabowski



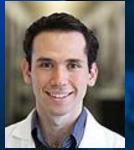
Diana Municchi



Jacqueline Ferland



Yoko Nomura



Jeremy Sherman



Kion Winston



Katie Lynch



Andre Toussaint



Clinical

Research Team

Chinara Tate



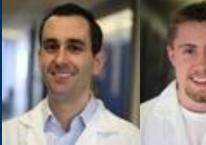
Jasper Van Oort



Gabrielle Zbaeren



Pavan Poojai



Joseph Landry James Callens



Pamela Comlan



Daniel Garcia

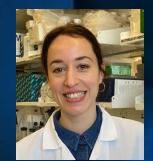


Maria Purcell

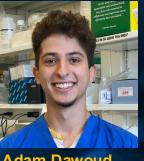


Chris Kudrich





(Maria) Eli Savoia



Adam Dawoud





Sam Cartwright Alfonso Brea Guerrero



Hanish Kodali



Ashanta Carter

