# Psychology Extra Credit – Schizophrenia and Marijuana

Link to article: <http://psychcentral.com/news/2012/11/23/marijuana-withdrawal-linked-to-behavior-changes-in-people-with-schizophrenia/48009.html>

We learned in class the link between using cannabis and the nearly double increase in chances of being diagnosed with schizophrenia. Marijuana has been in the news so much lately with the latest election that it has brought more light to the link between marijuana and schizophrenia. In the article it brings up the link of increased withdrawal symptoms for marijuana for those with schizophrenia. I would like to know if there is an increase in withdrawal symptoms beyond marijuana, specifically other psychosis inducing drugs, but I was unable to find any. This relates to the course because it shows there is an increase in withdrawal symptoms for schizophrenics when they stop using drugs potentially making them even harder at getting off of drugs and increasing their chances of relapsing with the drug. The article also points out the significantly higher rate of which the patient goes back to the drug due to the increasing number of withdrawal symptoms. I’d also like to know if there were ways to educate schizophrenics on how to deal with the withdrawal symptoms of harder drugs like heroin and also keep them on their medication whereby then they can take the drugs that stop them from being able to get the high to help them curb their drug addiction.

# Psychology Extra Credit – Increase in suicide rates

Link to article: <http://www.ravallirepublic.com/news/local/article_82b54e74-3686-11e2-b90d-0019bb2963f4.html>

Suicide is a touchy subject for most people, we all know someone or have friends who knew someone who have committed suicide. The media picked up suicide in the last few years with the string of suicides within the LGBT community bringing out the “It gets better” campaign. While that cause is great considering my brother is gay and struggled with suicide, even myself included struggled with suicidal thoughts in high school, the twenty percent increase in rates in suicide over the last five years is startling. We talked about the treatment of suicide in the course, but even with all of this, there is still a stigma with getting help – especially in the teen years. People often think that they are “pansies” if they get help or are afraid to ask for it until it is too late. The hurt continues beyond the immediate kin. My sophomore year in high school one of the more popular girls committed suicide and even until I graduated high school it rocked our school. The one negative thing I can say about that suicide is the fact that the school did not provide much support for those students who were closely connected to her. Most of the support came from her mother, who happened to be my teacher explaining every year to her students, the story of her daughter and that it isn’t the answer. I believe in order to lower the suicide rates there needs to be a PSA, much like how the “It gets better” campaign did, to target those at risk – teens, minorities, and elderly. The article points out the significantly higher risk for suicide within the American Indian population due to their susceptibility of being of lower socioeconomic status as well as alcoholism. The article doesn’t bring up the statistic that we learned in class that nearly half of all suicide attempts are done under the influence of alcohol but that surely doesn’t help the American Indians in this case.

# Psychology Extra Credit – Eating Disorders

Link to article: <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2012/11/19/demi-lovato-a-new-kind-of-hollywood-role-model/>

Eating disorders are becoming more and more prevalent within our society. Is seems that more girls (and guys) are getting eating disorders these days, especially college students. In my own personal life I have a great friend who struggles with an eating disorder, even as I write now I am talking to her about it. While it’s not relevant to this article exactly, it destroys not only the physical and mental aspect of the person that has an eating disorder but if you’re around a person with an eating disorder you pick up certain traits and it effects yourself mentally. Shockingly my friend shared aspects of my life and her counselor thought I potentially had an eating disorder. I picked up traits like not eating all my food, picking apart food, etc from being around her at meals over the years. We have talked about the ways of helping a person with an eating disorder, and this article points out how people look up to celebrities and other prominent figures for what looking good and healthy is, when that’s wrong. At the end of the day we’re going to have to break the social idea of what is healthy, because what people view now as healthy is not true. With websites like Change.com promoting campaigns to stop using abnormally skinny models and excessive amounts of photoshop I believe it can help not only our generation but generations to come with body image issues.

# Psychology Extra Credit - Suicide at the VA

Link to article: <http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-201_162-4015944.html>

The rashes of suicides at the Dallas VA hits close to home for me for the fact that my mother was one of the heads of that hospital at the time. These suicides were right when my mother took a transfer from the VA in Sacramento to Dallas and worked closely in preventing the suicides as well as overhauling the negative image the VA has. In the article it talks about all of the preventative measures that Ms. Orsak (Geoffrey Orsak’s – Ex-Dean of Lyle’s wife actually), Mr. Dalpiaz, and my mother working closely in making sure that the brave veterans got the treatment they needed in a home-like and safe environment. The positive that came out of the loss of life was the overhaul of the psychiatric ward, which since then has not had any suicides. For this I actually called my mother to learn, beyond what the article talks about, how they addressed the issues. She stated by studying what they call anchor points or places where people could use something to harm themselves they found many ways to make the environment safer. They removed all ceiling tiles and replaced them with ceilings that you would find at a home, hands free sinks, single piece toilets, placing alarms on over the door frames, piano hinge doors, hidden plumbing, and velcrod artwork to name a few. While it is sad to lose a life, the VA found a way to turn it around into a positive and potentially saving numerous lives. They also made sure to lessen the length of time between checking on those in the psychiatric ward down to as little as fifteen minutes with constant camera supervision all the while keeping privacy as a top concern.

# Psychology Extra Credit – Passing along Social Anxiety Disorder

Link to article: <http://www.medicaldaily.com/articles/12960/20121102/parents-social-anxiety-disorder-pass-fears-children.htm>

There are many triggers of why people become anxious. The article points out that the parents can cause their kin to grow up anxious, just as we learned in class. In the article, the parents who do not get help passed along the anxiety to their children due to a few factors such as being more critical towards their children and showing less affection. This can be detrimental because it hinders their children being able to experience their full potential. While there was inconclusive evidence that the effects were long term I can only imagine if you’re anxious through high school that when you get to college you’re not going to have a huge learning curve socially. The prevalence of anxiety disorders I am sure has skyrocketed since the recession hit and I am sure we will see a generation that’s more and more worried about their life in the short and long-term. This stills brings up the fact that parents should be aware, if they’re anxious, that it rubs off on their children. The article also brings up that of 45 parents with generalized anxiety disorder had 21 of their children diagnosed with social anxiety disorder. That number to me is startling, even if the pool of participants was relatively small. To relate back to the class it brings up the fact that their parents can be triggers that bring out anxiety within their children.

# Psychology Extra Credit – Alcohol and Substance Abuse and Dependence

Link to article: <http://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-11-alcohol-drug-abuse-counselors-dont.html>

Alcoholism is rampant in college, sure we joke about how there’s no such thing as alcoholism in college but I believe that it’s very much an issue – especially at SMU. What is shocking about this article is the fact that more and more professionals are saying it is acceptable for moderate, but still in control, drinking if you’re diagnosed with alcohol abuse or dependance. While most counselors were against moderate substance abuse, as they should be, it still is shocking to hear. Completely saying that alcohol is bad is the wrong message to send the article states, which I back completely. I believe this is why SMU’s Health Center has been so successful with dealing with students who have been required to take alcohol courses and evaluation after getting caught drinking underage. While I myself have not taken that program, I have taken TIPS training through the university and with the university accepting slight amounts of alcohol it makes students more willing I believe to drink in moderation and willingness to participate in these programs. From a campus-wide aspect, because the university has taught us that drinking in moderation is completely ok I believe that it makes our campus safer because students are better educated and can make more accurate and timely decisions to call 911 in dangerous situations involving alcohol or drugs.

# Psychology Extra Credit - Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Link to article: <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/conman-baits-some-big-fish-collecting-85m-20121108-290xm.html>

Of all these ponzi schemes that seem to be on the news every week these days it seems more and more of them are using narcissistic personality disorder to their defense. In the article it talks about how an Australian man duped people out of millions of dollars by faking an image of success, power, and brilliance. This relates to the course because I feel that most ponzi schemes are run by people who feel they’ll never be caught and get away with it for years because they can fake it to the public and no one thinks anything of it. Some I believe could easily be diagnosed with OCD after reading articles and watching documentaries over these individuals. As we learned in the course, and which I would like to learn but the article doesn’t state anything about this, was how they’re raised as children and how that relates to their disorder. What’s odd is the fact that at trial he ended up saying he was very sorry, whether that’s real or not I do not know. When watching CNBC’s American Greed you can see that many individuals caught show little to no remorse for their wrongdoings.

# Extra Credit for Psychology – Is PTSD over diagnosed, merely a mental weakness, or real?

Link to article: <http://usnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/11/26/15395330-ptsd-may-be-overdiagnosed-but-ptsd-deniers-are-wrong-psychologists-say?lite>

As you know now, my mother works with veterans for a living so hearing about PTSD is something I’ve heard a lot around the dinner table. The article brings up an idea that PTSD is over diagnosed and potentially just a mental weakness. I find that absurd to hear since I know many people who have gone through living hell in war seeing their best friends blown to pieces. On one side I almost view PTSD as under diagnosed. The article brings up a comment by a member of the military, “just put your head down and keep going.” That aside, my grandfather still relives the days of World War II. My grandmother often wakes up to him screaming and reliving the days of seeing men die right in front of him. I believe you should beg the question, in defense that it’s under diagnosed, that men have the image of being brave and strong. They, in some of their eyes, feel that if they seek help they’re not a man anymore. This relates to the course because, as I am sure you’ve noticed, I feel that mental health needs to be more inviting for those who seek treatment or are contemplating about seeking treatment. Anything from eating disorders, phobias, to PTSD there’s still the fear of seeking treatment.