

The American Issue



2015 American Council on Alcohol Problems Conference

The 2015 American Council on Alcohol Problems annual meeting and conference will be at the Hyatt Place Renaissance in Ridgeland, Mississippi on September 14-15, 2015. ACAP affiliates will meet Monday evening, September 14, at 6:00 p.m. for dinner (on your own) at a local restaurant and at 7:00 p.m. for a business session and an inspirational message from a local pastor.

On Tuesday, September 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., ACAP affiliates; local prevention groups and interested individuals are invited to the conference hosted by the Christian Action Commission of Mississippi. The following speakers are on the agenda:

- **Andy and Karen Taggart**, civic leaders in Mississippi who will speak about their son's substance abuse and suicide.
- **Bill Waller**, Chief Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court who will speak on strengthening drug courts through strong legislation.
- **Larry Walker**, Director of the National Center for Natural Products Research at the University of Mississippi. The University of Mississippi is conducting research on CBD oil. The destructive elements of marijuana will be addressed as well.
- **Sam Owens**, Director of the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics. Mr. Owens will speak about spice (synthetic marijuana).

You will find many things to occupy your leisure time as well. The Hyatt Place Renaissance is within walking distance to the Colony Park Shopping Center. Ten miles south of Ridgeland in Jackson, Mississippi, celebrate the spirit of the Civil Rights Movement at Smith Robertson Museum and Cultural Center. Visit the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Museum – named among the Top 10 “Most Amazing Baseball Museums in America” by ESPN. See the animals at the Jackson Zoological Park.

To obtain more information or to register for the meeting, call or email Cheryl Corley, 205-989-8177 or ccorley@alcap.com.

ACAP is the successor to the American Temperance League and the Anti-Saloon League established in 1895.

Membership is made up of state temperance organizations, national Christian denominations and other fraternal organizations that support ACAP's philosophy of abstinence

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Message from ACAP President, Ed Wolkin

In case you're not aware of it we have a major crisis on our hands in this country. The addictive use of legalized marijuana and prescription opiates is rapidly destroying the lives of so many of our young people. In my state of Massachusetts alone we have lost 1000 young lives this year. In Beverly, Massachusetts, a city less than 5 miles from my home, they have one of the first recovery high schools established in this country. They have been in operation for many years with an excellent success and graduation rate, but this year two students lost their lives thanks to opiates. The loss of life is something they had not had to experience in the past.

I have just returned from the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church. While attending I spoke to a fellow by the name of Jack A. Cole who is the co-founder of an organization called Law Enforcement against Prohibition. My first reaction was, "this is an organization against Prohibition," that made little sense to me. On talking to Mr. Cole I discovered that he was a retired New Jersey police detective who spent 27 years as an undercover narcotics officer. During that time he made many arrests for the use of drugs, but insists that in all those years he did nothing toward winning the war on drugs. What he did accomplish was to take the addict off the street and place them into prison where he or she became part of the drug cycle in the institution. He feels that drugs cannot be defeated as long as we treat them in a punitive way and not as a health crisis. By taking it out of the hands of law enforcement he feels we stand a much better chance of winning this war. This to me seems like an interesting concept. During this same conference the New England Conference of the Methodist Church passed a resolution to be sent on to its international conference asking that they endorse the same concept.

Of further interest to me is a program that has just been developed by the police department in the town of Gloucester, Massachusetts. It is a concept that has attracted wide interest throughout the country. What the police in Gloucester are doing is telling anyone who is addicted to drugs that if they come to the police department and ask for help and turn in any illegal drugs in their possession they will not be arrested, but will be assigned to a trained volunteer "Angel" who has been trained to guide that person into a recovery system. If the addict has outstanding warrants and other charges for the sale of narcotics he or she will still face arrest on those charges.

In my own hometown, the local newspaper just recently dedicated a whole week of papers that carried front-page and inside pages exposing the drug and alcohol problems in our area, and highlighting some of the groups that were engaged in fighting this epidemic.

It is clear to me that the times are changing once again. We have gone beyond the feeling that organizations such as ours are just groups of do-gooders standing on the corner preaching in the wind. Legislators and citizens alike are beginning to hear our message. It is time that we go all out in making every effort to attract more affiliates to our ACAP organization. With larger numbers we have the potential of becoming a meaningful force in curing this national epidemic. Please spend time being in contact with all the connections you have in your local flight and let them know of our national connection. Let's face it, our work is rapidly becoming that of saving lives.

Message from ACAP Executive Director, Bill Day

Driving while intoxicated is a serious problem around the world and treated rather harshly by most countries.

For instance, in Australia, the names of drunk drivers are printed in newspapers under the heading, "He's Drunk and in Jail."

In Malaya, a married man caught driving while drunk is jailed, along with his wife.

In Turkey, drunk drivers are taken twenty miles from town by police and forced to walk back under escort.

In Finland and Sweden, a drunk driver is jailed one year at hard labor.

In South Africa, a 10-year sentence or \$10,000 fine or both are levied.

In Russia, a drunk driver's license is revoked for life.

In El Salvador the punishment for drunk driving is execution by a firing squad.

The Bible labels intoxication as a serious matter also: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1)



Concern Grows Over Unregulated Pesticide Use Among Marijuana Growers

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National Public Radio LUKE RUNYON

The marijuana industry has a pesticide problem. Many commercial cannabis growers use chemicals to control bugs and mold. But the plant's legal status is unresolved.

The grow room at Medical MJ Supply in Fort Collins, Colorado, has all the trappings of a modern marijuana cultivation facility: glowing yellow lights, plastic irrigation tubes and rows of knee-high cannabis plants.

"We're seeing a crop that's probably in its third or fourth week," says Nick Dice, the owner. The plants are vibrantly green, happy and healthy. Dice says that's because the company has taken a hard line on cleanliness. "We have people who that's their only job is to look for any infections or anything that could cause potential damage to the crop," he says.

As any farmer will likely say, damage to the crop equals damage to the bottom line. Dice's employees used to spray the crop with mild chemicals. They would switch between multiple pesticides and mildew treatments, treating the plants every three to four days. Dice says he's seen other operations crumble as their cannabis succumbs to mildew or bugs. Pest controls ensure a good yield. And when it comes to cannabis, yields really matter.

Dice estimates the grow room is worth as much as \$180,000. Protecting that yield is hard work. That's why many growers in states that have legalized recreational or medical marijuana use chemicals. But it's the federal government that tells farmers which pesticides are safe to use. And so far, the feds wants nothing to do with legalized marijuana. Colorado State University entomologist Whitney Cranshaw says that's left growers to experiment with little oversight.

"In the absence of any direction the subject of pesticide use on the crop has just devolved to whatever people think is working or they think is appropriate," he says. Tobacco farmers, for example, have a stable of pesticides the government says are safe to use. But Cranshaw says marijuana growers have none. "Sometimes they've used things that are inappropriate, sometimes unsafe," he says.

Brett Eaton is a plant expert with American Cannabis Company, a Denver-based consulting group. He's concerned about what the pesticides are doing to the product as well as the consumer. "Anybody can get their hands on harmful chemicals, and they can just spray away all the way up until the last day of harvest," he says.

Safety concerns led Denver officials to place a hold on tens of thousands of marijuana plants earlier this year, pending an investigation. Colorado doesn't require growers to test the crop for traces of pesticides before being sold. But state agriculture officials did recently release a list of pesticides deemed appropriate for use on cannabis. The states of Washington, Nevada and Illinois have similar lists. Eaton says regulators are only playing catch up.

"Other agricultural industries already have policies in place for the safe use of spraying certain pesticides and fungicides," he says. "This being a new industry, it hasn't been addressed yet."

And with more states turning marijuana into a legal commodity crop, it'll take a mix of policy, science and industry self-regulation to figure out what's appropriate, and what's not.



Visit the ACAP Website to stay up-to-date on current issues regarding alcohol and marijuana; and read Dr. Bill Day's blog "Dayly Design."

www.sapacap.com.

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WHO WE ARE:

American Council on Alcohol Problems is the channel of cooperation through which state temperance organizations, national religious bodies and similar concerned groups in America can unite to deal with the problems caused by alcohol and other drugs.

Visit the ACAP Website at www.sapacap.com

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Study Defines Brain and Behavioral Effects of Teen Drinking

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www.spectrum.niaaa.nih.gov

Adolescent binge drinking can disrupt gene regulation and brain development in ways that promote anxiety and excessive drinking behaviors which can persist into adulthood, according to a study published online in the journal *Neurobiology of Disease*.

These behaviors likely were the result of epigenetic changes, which are chemical modifications to DNA or DNA proteins that regulate gene activity without making changes to the underlying DNA sequence.

Previous studies have shown that people who start drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to meet the criteria for alcohol dependence at some point in their lives than those who delay drinking until age 21, and that young people consume more than 90 percent of their alcohol by binge drinking.

Researchers led by Subhash C. Pandey, Ph.D., of the University of Illinois at Chicago and a Research Career Scientist at Jesse Brown Veteran Affairs Medical Center in Chicago, investigated the effects of intermittent binge alcohol exposure during the adolescent stage of development in rats. To model adolescent binge drinking in humans, the researchers gave 28-day-old rats alcohol for 2 days in a row, followed by 2 days off, and repeated this pattern for 13 days. Some rats were followed into adulthood and observed for abnormal behaviors. They were offered both alcohol and water, and their alcohol-drinking behavior was monitored.

Rats exposed to alcohol during adolescence exhibited changes in behavior that lasted into adulthood, long after their adolescent binge exposure to alcohol had ended. For example, they showed increased anxiety-like behaviors and drank more alcohol in adulthood.

Prior research has implicated a brain structure known as the amygdala in anxiety and alcohol-drinking behaviors. When Dr. Pandey and his colleagues analyzed the amygdalas of alcohol-exposed rats in their study, they found that the complex of DNA and histone proteins within the amygdala cell nuclei appeared to be tightly wrapped. They also found increased levels of a protein called HDAC2, which modifies histones in a way that causes DNA to be wound tighter around them. Collectively, these kinds of changes to DNA or its associated proteins, which change its function but do not affect the DNA sequence, are referred to as epigenetic changes.

Dr. Pandey and his team found that the epigenetic changes they observed in alcohol-exposed rats were linked to lowered expression of two genes—brain-derived neurotrophic factor and activity-regulated cytoskeleton-associated protein—that nerve cells need to form new connections with each other. The diminished expression of the genes persisted into adulthood, even if alcohol exposure was stopped weeks before, and the researchers observed diminished nerve connectivity in the amygdalas of these affected adult rats. The researchers then showed that a drug which blocks the activity of HDAC2 could loosen the coiling of DNA in the amygdala cell nuclei of alcohol-exposed rats, and thus increase the expression of the gene needed for nerve cell connectivity in those animals. The animals then also exhibited less anxiety and reduced alcohol intake.

Source:

Pandey, S.C.; Sakharkar, A.J.; Tang, L.; and Zhang, H. Potential role of adolescent alcohol exposure-induced amygdaloid histone modifications in anxiety and alcohol intake during adulthood. *Neurobiology of Disease*. March 24, 2015 [Epub ahead of print] PMID: 25814047