

Cannabis smoking a risk factor for periodontal disease

Tobacco smoking is a recognized behavioral risk factor for periodontal disease (through its systemic effects), and cannabis smoking may contribute in a similar way

The authors of this study published this week in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* point out that periodontal disease is one of the most common chronic diseases in adults. Tobacco smoking is known to be the main risk factor for the condition, which is mediated through bacterial infection that causes inflammation that extends deep into the supporting tissues of the teeth and gums. Smoking causes this disease through the action of nicotine and other toxic constituents that affect immune function and the inflammatory response, as well as reducing peripheral blood flow.

The aim of the study, carried out in New Zealand, was to determine whether or not cannabis has a similar effect. Researchers examined a complete cohort of people born in 1973 and 1974 in Dunedin, New Zealand who were assessed periodically. All those who survived to the age of 32 were included, resulting in complete data from 903 participants.

They found that cannabis smokers had a much greater risk of periodontal disease than people who did not smoke the substance and that this was independent of tobacco use.

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