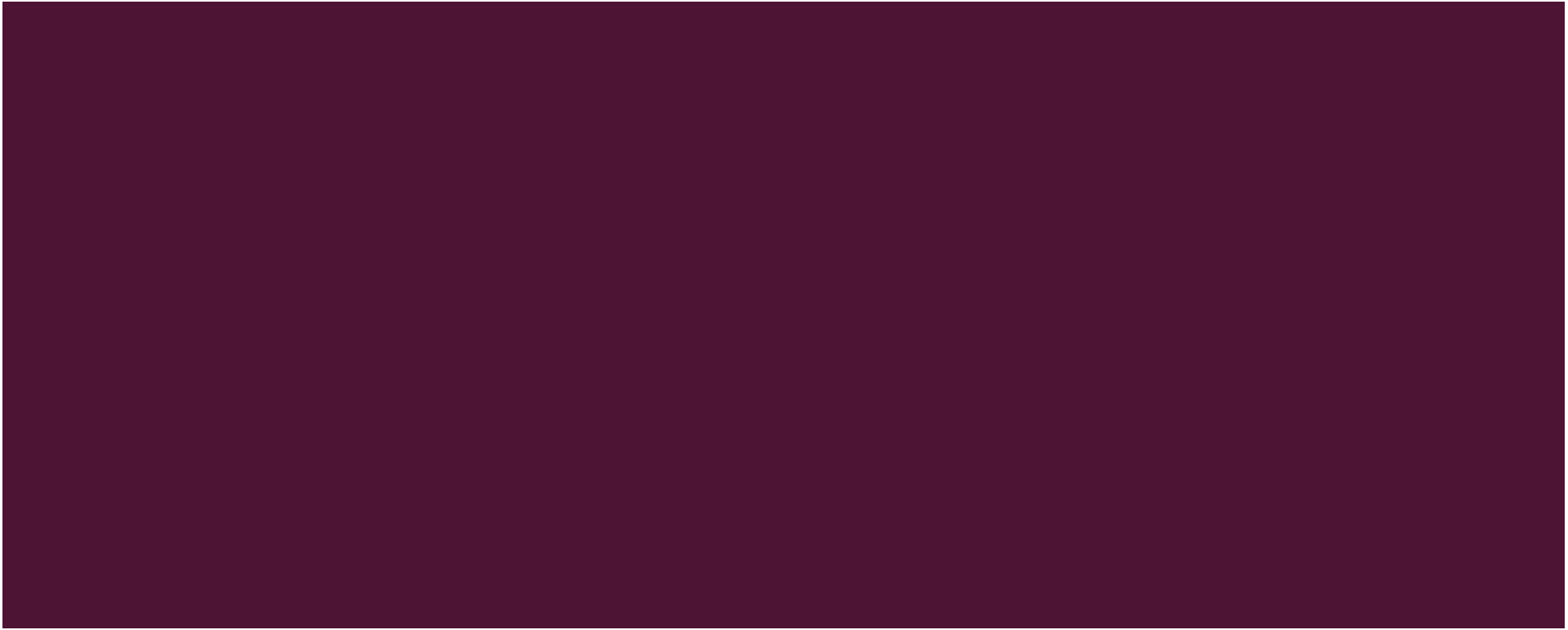

IS IT ALL OVER YOUR FACE? UNDERSTANDING THE PHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SUBSTANCE USE

A PHARMACIST'S PERSPECTIVE

UDUAK NTUEN , PHARMD, RPH, BSC





The Skin

Overview: Visible Signs of Substance Use

- Marijuana
- Stimulants
- Opioids
- Synthetic Substances
- Inhalants

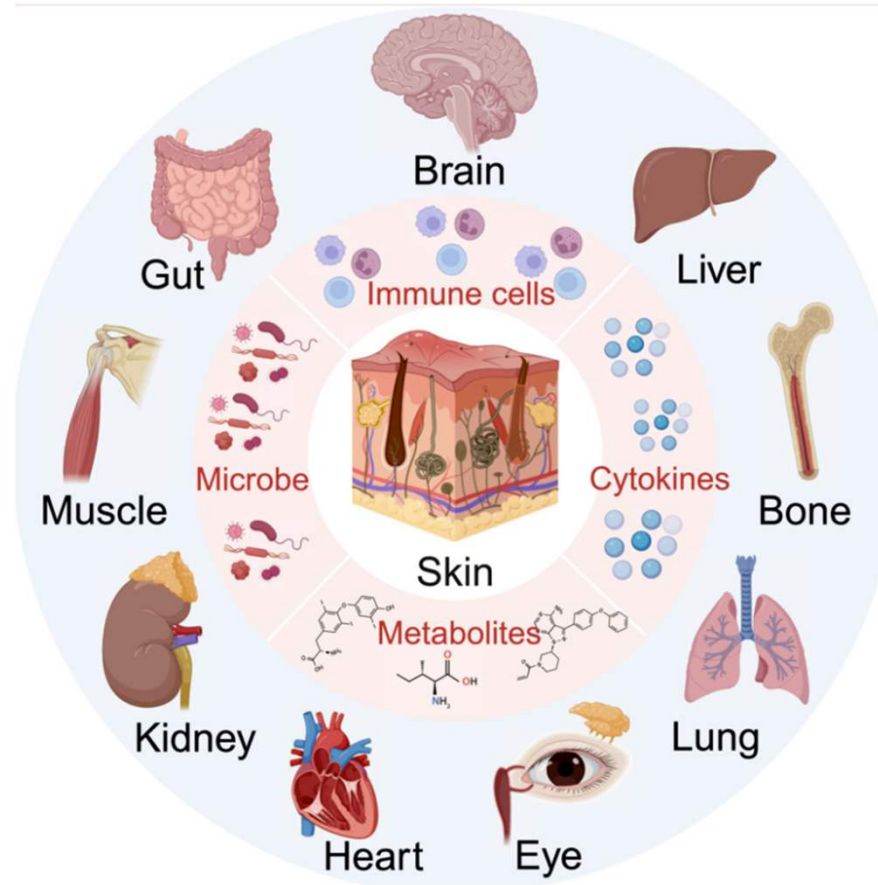
Long-term Effects

Compassionate Engagement



AGENDA

THE SKIN



VISIBLE PHYSICAL SIGNS OF SUBSTANCE USE

- **Skin:** track marks, scar tissue, rashes, cellulitis, infections
- **Hair:** hair loss, premature greys, trichotillomania
- **Teeth & Gums:** dental decay ('meth mouth'), gum disease, grinding/ clinched jaw, slowed or slurred speech, dry mouth
- **Eyes:** red eyes, pinpoint or dilated pupils, nystagmus
- **General appearance:** weight loss/gain, poor hygiene, premature aging, unusual odors and poor grooming habits
 - Appearance of drowsy, panicked, or at peace, depending on the type of “trip”

MARIJUANA: PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Weight gain due to increased appetite & cravings
- Red eyes, droopy eyelids
- Dry mouth
- Cannabis odor on clothes
- Slowed reaction time, poor coordination
- and poor memory
- Long-term: chronic cough, lung infections

American Addiction Centers. (2024, December 17). *Signs of drug use & addiction: How to tell if someone is on drugs*. Retrieved from <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/adult-addiction-treatment-programs/know-is-someone-on-drugs>

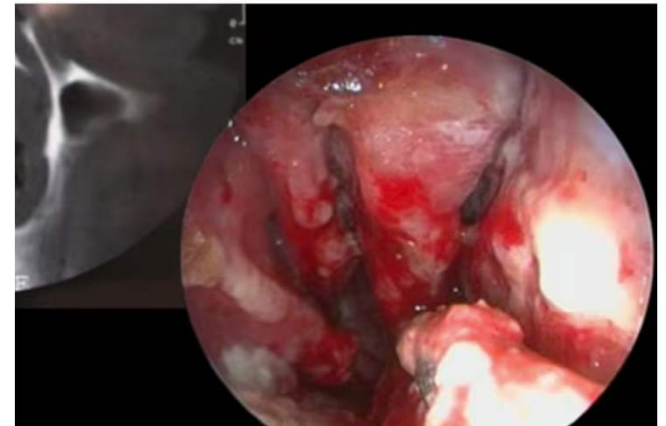
Volkow, N. D., Baler, R. D., Compton, W. M., & Weiss, S. R. B. (2014). Adverse health effects of marijuana use. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 370(23), 2219–2227. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMr1402309>

STIMULANTS (COCAINE, METH)

- Increased energy, dilated pupils
- Aggressive or erratic behavior > increased breathing rate > hyperhidrosis
- Weight loss, insomnia, anxiety
- Nasal damage an/or congestion if snorted
- Cutaneous effects due to parasitosis
- 'Meth mouth': severe dental decay

American Addiction Centers. (2024, December 17). *Signs of drug use & addiction: How to tell if someone is on drugs*. Retrieved from <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/adult-addiction-treatment-programs/know-is-someone-on-drugs>

Medscape. (n.d.). *Drug abuse manifestations* [Slideshow]. Retrieved from https://reference.medscape.com/slideshow/drug-abuse-manifestations-6007476?icd=login_success_email_match_norm#21



OPIOIDS

- Needle marks, skin abscesses
- Constricted pupils
- Sedation, confusion, slowed reaction times
- Constipation, weight loss
- Long-term: depression, infections (HIV, Hep C)

American Addiction Centers. (2024, December 17). *Signs of drug use & addiction: How to tell if someone is on drugs*. Retrieved from <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/adult-addiction-treatment-programs/know-is-someone-on-drugs>

Medscape. (n.d.). *Drug abuse manifestations* [Slideshow]. Retrieved from https://reference.medscape.com/slideshow/drug-abuse-manifestations-6007476?icd=login_success_email_match_norm#21



SYNTHETIC SUBSTANCES (K2, SPICE, BATH SALTS)

- Hallucinations, paranoia
- Extreme agitation or violence
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure
- Confusion, seizures
- Self-mutilation- with bath salts
- Hyperhidrosis with bath salts
- Strong body odor- with bath salts

Every-Palmer S. (2011). Synthetic cannabinoid JWH-018 and psychosis: an explorative study. *Drug and alcohol dependence*, 117(2-3), 152–157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2011.01.012>

Medscape. (n.d.). *Drug abuse manifestations* [Slideshow]. Retrieved from https://reference.medscape.com/slideshow/drug-abuse-manifestations-6007476?icd=login_success_email_match_norm#21

INHALANTS

- Perforation of the nasal septum
- Rash around mouth and nose
- Slurred speech, poor coordination
- Dizziness, confusion
- Lingering odor of chemicals
- Long-term: brain and nerve damage

National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2020). Inhalants research report.



MEDICAL INSIGHTS ON LONG-TERM EFFECTS

- Malnutrition, skin infections
- Premature aging, poor wound healing
- Dental disease, 'meth mouth'
- Chronic lung disease, heart disease
- Increased risk of infectious diseases

Darke, S., Kaye, S., & Duflou, J. (2017). Substance abuse and chronic disease. *Addiction*, 112(3), 461-470.

COMPASSIONATE ENGAGEMENT & RECOVERY PATHWAYS

- Use observations as entry points for dialogue
- Engage without judgment; reduce stigma
- Connect to treatment & harm reduction resources
- Pharmacists: medication-assisted treatment support
- Recovery is possible with multidisciplinary care



THANK
YOU!