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Acute Kidney Injury Linked With Synthetic Marijuana

A new report links acute kidney injury with use of synthetic marijuana.

Researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham say doctors should consider the possibility of synthetic marijuana use in young adult patients with negative urine drug screens who have acute kidney damage.

In the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*, the researchers describe four cases of previously healthy young men, whose acute kidney injury was associated with synthetic marijuana, such as Spice and K2. The men came to the hospital with symptoms of nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain after using synthetic marijuana, Science Daily reports.

All four men recovered kidney function, and none required dialysis, the article notes.

Study co-author Gaurav Jain, MD, said that synthetic marijuana generally includes several additives, and these ingredients could have caused the kidney injury, rather than the synthetic marijuana. "There is very little information regarding the ingredients in synthetic cannabinoids that are sold on the streets, although it is known that additional compounds are added to the preparations," Dr. Jain noted in a news release.

The researchers said doctors should ask about the use of synthetic drugs when evaluating patients with acute kidney injury, especially when the origin of the injury is unknown, and the patient has a negative urine drug test.

Although these four patients did not sustain permanent damage, synthetic marijuana has the potential to cause lasting damage, Dr. Jain observed. "If they don't get to a physician in time, the damage to their kidneys could be permanent, and they could end up on dialysis," he said.

To learn more about Marijuana, click here.