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**APPNA**  
Association of Physician of Pakistani  
Descent of South Texas Chapter

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# *the* PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. Mahmood Mehkri.  
President APPNA STC 2022



**APPNA**  
Association of Physician of Pakistani  
Descent of South Texas Chapter

*I am humbled and privileged to serve as the current President of APPNA STC.*



I am deeply thankful to the previous President *Dr. Arman Raza* for his leadership and contribution to APPNA STC, for increasing the membership to more than 300 members and making it one of the largest chapters in the USA.

I am also grateful to the past Presidents *Dr. Najma Aijaz*, *Dr. Haider Afzal* and *Dr. Tanveer Khan*, and our members for their support during the last, exceptionally challenging, two years.

My vision for 2022 is to integrate the passion of our young members with the experience of our senior members. I will continue to work on increasing membership, particularly that of young physicians so that they can actively work with APPNA and assume leadership roles.

APPNA STC committees for 2022 specifically Health Fair committee, Young Physicians committee and Sports committee are doing remarkable and unprecedented work which has helped APPNA STC to be recognized as a strong organization in the community.

We are very proud of our 2nd Edition of Greater Physician's Directory and we are confident that it will serve as a valuable resource for our community.

Please welcome our new Executive Committee of 2022: Dr Naveed Zafar as President Elect, Dr Riaz-ul-Haq as General Secretary and Dr Naveed Saqib as the Treasurer.

Wishing everyone a blessed year,

Sincerely,

**Dr. Mahmood Mehkri**  
President APPNA STC 2022



## *Executive Committee*



**Dr. Mahmood Mehkri**  
President



**Dr. Naveed Zafar**  
President Elect

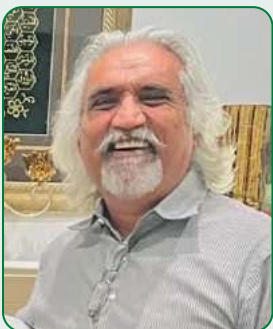


**Dr. Riaz-ul-Haq**  
General Secretary



**Dr. Naveed Saqib**  
Treasurer

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**Dr. Tariq Aziz**  
Chair



**Dr. Najma Aijaz**  
Secretary



**Dr. Haider Afzal**



**Dr. Tanveer Khan**



**Dr. Syed Arman Raza**



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Co -Chair: DR. HINA FAISAL

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Chair: DR. AISHA KHATTAK

Co-Chair: DR. TARA RIZVI

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Chair: DR. KAMRAN KHAN

Co-Chair: DR. HINA FAISAL

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Chair: DR. FABIA YOUNUS

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Chair: DR. MANSOOR ZAIDI

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Co-Chair: DR. AISHA KHATTAK

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# OVERLOOKED IMPACTS OF MARIJUANA

Author: Dr. Hibba Ali Haider

Marijuana legalization rose but despite some of its specific benefits, it has lots of overlooked side effects if not medically recommended and prescribed.

Considerations before one smokes or consumes weed edibles:

## Memory loss

Habitual smokers have short-term memory problems. Research shows that smoking marijuana regularly for five years causes poor memory by middle age compared to those who do not smoke.

## Schizophrenia/ Hallucinations/Paranoia

Research links marijuana use and the development of schizophrenia. Delusions, hallucinations, thoughts that are out of touch with reality are caused by smoking weed. High doses can lead to significant paranoia.

## Anxiety

Smoking marijuana is frequently used as a “relaxant” but in those with a history of anxiety and depression, marijuana use can induce paranoia and worsen anxiety.

## Delayed Reaction Time

A delayed reaction time with marijuana can lead to driving impairments as well as prove hazardous while operating heavy machinery. Combined with alcohol, the effect is worse.

## Mood Swings

Marijuana can cause extreme mood swings and altered behavior resulting in difficulty in sustaining relationships and developing new ones.

## Poor Decision Making

Too much THC (the main psychoactive compound in marijuana) affects the ability to make rational decisions. Impulse control is lost.

## Heart Attack and Stroke risk

Marijuana raises the heart rate by 20 to 100% after smoking, which can last up to 3 hours. This can increase the risk of heart attack, heart failure and stroke.

## Lung Inflammation

Respiratory problems like chronic cough, airway inflammation and wheezing are a result of inhaling harmful substances mixed with marijuana. Smoking weed requires

deeper inhalation leading to five times the carbon monoxide and three times the tar content in lungs compared to cigarette smoking.

## Low Testosterone Levels

Chronic marijuana use can affect a myriad of hormones in the body and has been linked to disrupting sperm production and sperm function which can lead to infertility. Some studies suggest that chronic marijuana use may cause an imbalance between male testosterone and estrogen levels resulting in Gynecomastia (increase in male breast tissue) but the association is not very clear.

## Exposure to Dangerous Potencies

Edibles are 10 times more potent than a joint that is smoked. Edibles take an hour to digest unlike joints, which can start having an effect within seconds, so one consumes more given the delay in effect, causing more harm.







# CHICKISTAN

Authors: An Trinh Khan

In 2011, Moin Khan, a recent graduate of San Francisco State University, challenged himself to do something different to promote a positive image of his native Pakistan. After witnessing only negative media coverage of his country, Khan decided to ride his motorcycle all the way from San Francisco to Lahore, making sure to tell all the people he met along the way that there is much more to Pakistan than terrorism and oppression.

After that incredible journey, Khan set out to explore his own country and slowly but surely fell in love with Pakistan all over again. The following year he invited a group of his friends from California for a three-week motorcycle ride across some of the most beautiful mountains in the world.

Liza Miller from Santa Cruz, CA was one of the first riders to give Pakistan a chance in those troubled times. She fell in love with Pakistan, and more importantly with its people. It was then, at the end of Liza's first tour that she and Khan decided to arrange an all-women motorcycle tour of the South Asian country in a bid to attract tourism and challenge the problematic narratives regarding Pakistan in the Western media.

"Chickistan" was born and has grown into something more than just a motorcycle adventure. Now in its third year, this all-women group loves empowering and uplifting other women all over the world. They have even donated several motorcycles to a girl's hostel in Shimshal (a village located in the Hunza District, in the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan), with proper motorcycle safety gear and motorcycle maintenance training and tools.

Feedback from the tour has been incredible, with dozens of bikers coming each year to Pakistan to ride alongside Khan, and with Chickistan becoming a main feature every season.

Though media narratives, many years later, continue to focus on the negative news, somewhere deep in the Himalayas every summer, a group of motorcyclists from around the world are touring Pakistan with a very different agenda.

You can check out reviews and tour detail at [www.ADifferentAgenda.com](http://www.ADifferentAgenda.com)





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- Internal Medicine
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- Pediatrics
- Geriatric and Palliative
- Clinical Research
- Surgery
- Anesthesiology
- Obstetrics/Gynecology
- Pain Management
- Podiatry
- Interventional Radiology
- Emergency Medicine
- Hyperbaric Medicine



- Cardiology
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology
- Infectious Diseases
- Hematology/Oncology
- Nephrology
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
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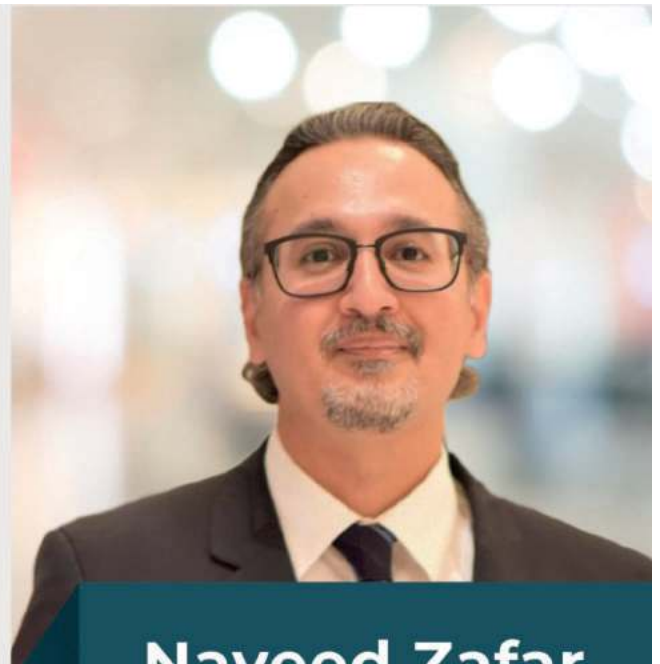
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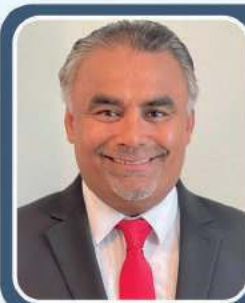
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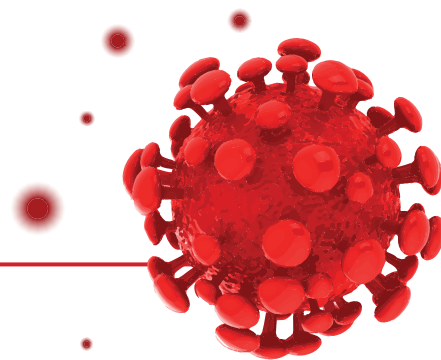


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# POST-COVID CONDITIONS

## LONG COVID

Authors: Dr. Mehmood Mehkri  
Dr. Aisha Khattak



Most people who have coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) recover completely within a few weeks but some people, even those who had mild versions of the disease, continue to experience symptoms after their initial recovery.

People who continue to experience post COVID-19 symptoms sometimes describe themselves as “long haulers” and these long-term effects are now known as post-COVID-19 conditions (PCC) or long COVID. Effects must persist for more than four weeks after an active COVID-19 infection for it to constitute as long COVID.

People with PCC may experience a wide array of symptoms happening over different lengths of time. Most patients’ symptoms slowly improve with time. In some, the symptoms can improve and then recur and then in others PCC may last months and potentially years after COVID-19 illness which may result in disability.

People who experience PCC most commonly report:

### General symptoms

- Tiredness or fatigue that interferes with daily life
- Symptoms that get worse after physical or mental effort (*also known as “post-exertional malaise”*)
- Fever

### Respiratory and Cardiovascular symptoms

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Cough
- Chest pain
- Fast-beating or pounding heart (*also known as heart palpitations*)

### Neurological symptoms

- Difficulty thinking or concentrating (*sometimes referred to as “brain fog”*)
- Headache
- Sleep problems
- Dizziness when you stand up (*lightheadedness*)
- Pins-and-needles feelings
- Change in smell or taste
- Depression or anxiety

### Digestive symptoms

- Diarrhea
- Stomach pain

### Miscellaneous symptoms

- Joint or muscle pain
- Rash
- Changes in menstrual cycles

People with PCC may develop or continue to have symptoms that are hard to explain and manage. Clinical evaluations and results of routine blood tests, chest x-rays, and electrocardiograms may be normal. The symptoms may be like those reported by patients with myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) and other poorly understood chronic illnesses that usually occur after other infections. People with these unexplained symptoms may be misunderstood by their healthcare providers resulting in feelings of frustration and helplessness in the patient and delay in diagnosis and appropriate management.

### New Health Conditions

Some people experience new health conditions after COVID-19 illness. They may experience multiorgan effects or autoimmune conditions with symptoms lasting weeks or months after COVID-19 illness. Multiorgan effects can involve many systems, including the heart, lung, kidney, skin, and brain.

### Vaccination Can Prevent PCC/ Long COVID

The best way to prevent PCC is to protect yourself and others from becoming infected. People who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 and become infected may also be at higher risk of developing PCC compared to people who are vaccinated, even if they had breakthrough infections.

### Conclusion

Multiple large medical centers are opening specialized clinics to provide care for people who have persistent symptoms or related illnesses after they recover from COVID-19. Support groups are available as well. It is important to remember that most people who have COVID-19 infection recover completely. But the potentially long-lasting problems from COVID-19 make it crucial to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by following precautions. Precautions include wearing masks in high risk areas, avoiding crowds, getting vaccinated and practicing hand hygiene.

\* Data extracted from the CDC and AMA website

\* Long COVID: Long-Term Effects of COVID-19, John Hopkin Medicine, June 14, 2022.





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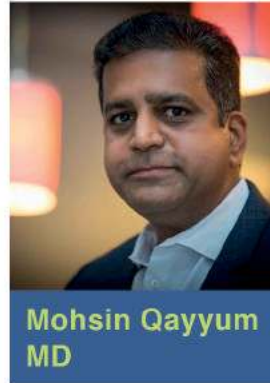


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# ADDICTION TO STAYING AWAKE

Author: Dr. Hibba Ali Haider



Energy drinks and highly caffeinated beverage consumption have deleterious effects on the health of adolescents, and we must seriously ponder on what to do about it.

We are aware of the marketing campaigns and advertisements for energy drinks that have flooded the visual media, air waves and billboards. These companies are promoting their 'special potion' to give you the extra boost, charge you up, instill energy in the afternoon grind and make a buzzing bee out of you.

Health Professionals see through these false marketing claims, but the young and curious brains who see this as an easy solution to re-boost energy levels, are easily misled as these ads are specifically targeted to children and adolescents.

Since these energy drinks were introduced in the 1980s, their utilization has increased tremendously over the years. In a 2018 American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) report, it was estimated that the energy drink market profits were greater than 15 billion (with a B) annually. They had more than 500 new brands introduced in the US alone. Their market share has grown exorbitantly mainly by targeting the youth and adolescents, mostly males and avid athletes, by variety of direct visual advertisements as well as print, social media, sports sponsorships, campus parties, games, and tournaments. There has been a 30% increase in the intake of energy drinks by teenagers between the years 2010 and 2015. Amongst them one third are habitual and regular users. Most consume them 2-3 times per month. Common reasons for use of energy drinks are lack of sleep, school course load, meeting deadlines for assignments, driving for long periods of time and, most worrisome of all, to mix with alcoholic drinks while partying.

Caffeinated Energy Drinks or CED claim to improve vitality, energize, enhance concentration and reduce fatigue. This is a contrasting market strategy to sports drinks, which are meant to rehydrate and restore lost electrolytes during intense exercise. Both CEDs and sports drinks have the same ingredients including water, carbohydrates, electrolytes, amino acids, vitamins, and minerals. It is interesting and notable that despite having all the non-nutritive stimulants such as caffeine, taurine, and guarana in CEDs, these companies



make the shameless argument in favor of consumption of CEDs for health benefits.

Caffeine, the most common stimulant in CEDs, is absorbed by all body tissues. Its pharmacokinetic effects manifest in the central nervous system, on behavior in the form of anxiety, pressured and fast speech, and in the cardiovascular system as tachycardia, palpitations, and high blood pressure.

On the molecular level, caffeine acts as reversible adenosine receptor antagonist i.e. it blocks the action of adenosine on its receptor resulting in transient reduction in fatigue and sleepiness. However, the





physiological effects of caffeine can undermine these short-term perceived benefits by prolonging the latency to fall asleep, spoiling sleep quality and decreasing sleep duration.

By falsely marketing, branding, and rating energy drinks as nutritional, manufacturers place them under less meticulous regulations than beverages classified as colas or dietary supplements. It is astonishing that a 12 oz can of soda cannot legally contain more than 65 mg of caffeine, a 6 oz cup of coffee contains 80-120 mg of caffeine but in an unregulated energy drink the amount of caffeine can vary considerably. Among some of the marketed energy drink brands, the total amount of caffeine in a 16 oz serving can be up to 600 mg. This is almost 2-5 times the amount in a cup of tea or coffee.

Guarana (Brazilian cocoa) and Yerba Mate (Plant based) increase the caffeine content of energy drinks without being accounted for in the labelled caffeine amount.

Taurine, another common ingredient in energy drinks, is an aminoethenasulfonic acid which is widely present in human tissue. It is important for some of the physiological functions of the body, brain, and retina, and has antioxidant properties as well. Its daily recommended dietary allowance (RDA) is between 40-400 mg. Human and animal studies reject the claim that Taurine enhances mental and physical performance. The terrifying truth is that Taurine alters the effects of alcohol and may put individuals at higher risk when combined with alcohol.

There is well documented correlation between energy drink utilization and multiple high-risk habits and behaviors. These involve poor health choices, poor dietary habits, alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use,

vaping and other drug experimentation and even high-risk sexual behaviors.

Given this information, how can Pediatric providers play a role? When taking a social history, Pediatric providers should be as upfront with teenagers in regards to their consumption of energy and caffeinated drinks as they would be about the use of sodas, alcohol, and/or drugs. Primary care providers can identify, gauge usage, educate and address the teenager's misguided notion of benefits of energy drinks. Clarify the difference between energy and sports drinks for them. Council affirmatively on plain water being the best source for improving hydration.

After an extensive review, the AAP Committee on Nutrition and the Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness's statement is that "caffeine and other stimulant substances in energy drinks have no nutritional value in the diets of children and adolescents".

We as primary care Pediatricians can have a holistic picture of one's health and are able to replace misleading information by evidence-based knowledge and facts that helps dismantle false marketing campaigns such as these.

I am confident that well guided and informed youths will realize the health hazards of energy drinks and refrain from their usage as source of energy and rather improve their nutritional status with a healthy and balanced diet.

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