Medical Marijuana: A Critical Look at Medicine, Politics, Public Health, and Profits

Aaron Weiner, PhD

Aaron. Weiner @eehealth.org





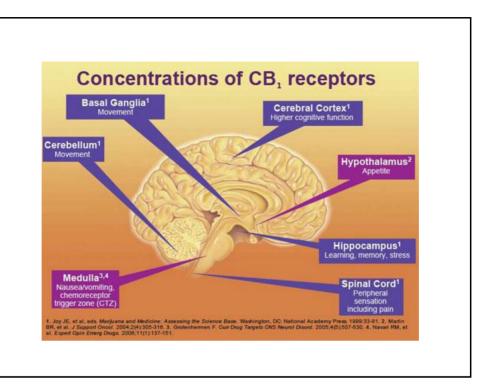


What is marijuana?

- Plant with 500 chemical compounds, and 100 cannabinoids
- THC & CBD
- THC binds to CB1 receptors

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- Plant with 500 chemical compounds, and 100 cannabinoids
- THC & CBD
- THC binds to CB1 receptors
- Most-used substance behind alcohol & tobacco
- Number of routes of administration

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(CDC, 2017)

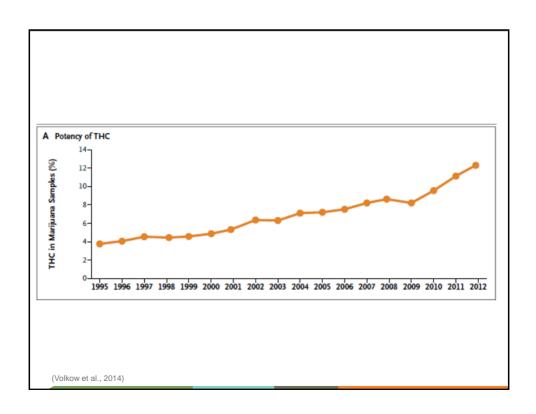




- Plant with 500 chemical compounds, and 100 cannabinoids
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- High variability of concentration
- Addictive substance

(CDC, 2017)

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Reviews and Overviews

Review of the Validity and Significance of Cannabis Withdrawal Syndrome

Alan J. Budney, Ph.D. John R. Hughes, M.D.

John R. Hughes, M.D. Brent A. Moore, Ph.D. The authors review the literature examining the validity and significance of canabis withdrawal syndrome. Findings from animal laboratory research are briefly reviewed, and human laboratory and clinical states are surveyed in more detail. Converging evidence from basic laboratory and clinical studies indical studies indicate the studies of th

sional and behavioral, although appetite change, weight loss, and physical loss, and physical comflort are also frequently reported. The nose and time course of these incourse of these proposes and time appear similar to those of other authorities and the similar to those of other magnitude and sewerity of these symptoms appear substantial, and these findings suggest that the vndrome has clinical importance. Diagnostic criterio. Diagnostic criterio. Diagnostic criterio. Diagnostic criterio.

(Am J Psychiatry 2004; 161:1967-1977)

The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

REVIEW ARTICLE

Dan L. Longo, M.D., Editor

Adverse Health Effects of Marijuana Use

Nora D. Volkow, M.D., Ruben D. Baler, Ph.D., Wilson M. Compton, M.D., and Susan R.B. Weiss, Ph.D.

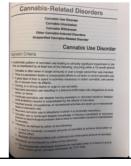
Effects of long-term or heavy use

Addiction (in about 9% of users overall, 17% of those who begin use in adolescence, and 25 to 50% of those who are daily users)*

DIAGNOSTIC AND STATISTICAL
MANUAL OF
MENTAL DISORDERS
FIFTH EDITION

DSM-5**

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION



- Plant with 500 chemical compounds, and 100 cannabinoids
- THC & CBD
- THC binds to CB1 receptors
- Most-used substance behind alcohol & tobacco
- Number of routes of administration
- High variability of concentration
- Addictive substance
 - Approximately 30% of active users have a SUD
 - 1:10 adults, 1:6 adolescents
- Well-studied detrimental impact on behavioral health and functioning

(CDC, 2017)

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Is this medicine?

- In Illinois since 2013, Ohio 2019
- Not approved by the FDA, nor prescribed/dispensed like medicine
 - Medicine: Marinol, Sativex, and Epidiolex

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Is this medicine?

- In Illinois since 2013, Ohio 2019
- Not approved by the FDA, nor prescribed/dispensed like medicine
 - Medicine: Marinol, Sativex, and Epidiolex
 - Not medicine: Buying whatever you like from a dispensary, using it however you want
 - Also consider: physicians are not pushing for this

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Therapeutic Uses for Marijuana

- What does quality research show it is good for?
 - Appetite stimulation
 - Nausea suppression
 - Some types of pain
 - MS spasticity (cannabinoids only)
 - Short-term sleep outcomes (cannabinoids only)
 - Good reference: National Academy of Sciences
- In Illinois, it is approved (by the legislature) for 51 conditions...starting at age 18 (Ohio 21)

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Qualifying Conditions

- AIDS
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)
- Alzheimer's disease
- Cancer
- Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy
- Crohn's Disease
- Epilepsy or another seizure disorder
- Fibromyalgia
- Glaucoma
- Hepatitis C
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease,

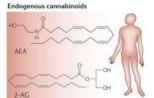
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Pain that is either chronic and severe or intractable
- Parkinson's Disease
- Positive status for HIV
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Sickle Cell Anemia
- Spinal Cord Disease or injury
- Tourette's Syndrome
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Ulcerative Colitis

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Endogenous Cannabinoids vs. Exogenous Manipulation

- Theory
 - Endocannabinoid system impacts many different diseases
 - Manipulate the same receptors, get the desired effect
- Reality
 - Hit & Miss





(Nature 2012)

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REVIEW

Open Access

Narrative review of the safety and efficacy of marijuana for the treatment of commonly stateapproved medical and psychiatric disorders

Katherine A Belendiuk¹, Lisa L Baldini² and Marcel O Bonn-Miller^{3,4,5*}

Abstract

The present investigation aimed to provide an objective narrative review of the existing literature pertaining to the benefits and harms of marijuana use for the treatment of the most common medical and psychological conditions for which it has been allowed at the state level. Common medical conditions for which than sale and so the provide of the provide of the state of the provide of the state of the st

Keywords: Cannabis, Medical marijuana, Marijuana, Medicine, Treatment, Alzheimer's disease, ALS, Cachexia, Cancer, Crohn's disease, Epilepsy, Seizures, Glaucoma, Hepatitis C virus, HCV, HIV, AIDS, Multiple sderosis, MS, Pain, Nausea, Vomiting, Post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD

Medical Marijuana

There is no or insufficient evidence to support or refute the conclusion that cannabis or cannabinoids are an effective treatment for:

- Cancers, including glioma (cannabinoids) (4-2)
- Cancer-associated anorexia cachexia syndrome and anorexia nervosa (cannabinoids) (4-4b)
- Symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (dronabinol) (4-5)
- Epilepsy (cannabinoids) (4-6)
- Spasticity in patients with paralysis due to spinal cord injury (cannabinoids) (4-7b)
- Symptoms associated with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (cannabinoids) (4-9)
- Chorea and certain neuropsychiatric symptoms associated with Huntington's disease (oral cannabinoids) (4-10)
- Motor system symptoms associated with Parkinson's disease or the levodopa-induced dyskinesia (cannabinoids) (4-11)
- Dystonia (nabilone and dronabinol) (4-12)
- Achieving abstinence in the use of addictive substances (cannabinoids) (4-16)
- Mental health outcomes in individuals with schizophrenia or schizophreniform psychosis (cannabidiol) (4-21)
- What about glaucoma?



Summary: Although marijuana can lower the intraocular pressure (IOP), its side effects and short duration of action, coupled with a lack of evidence that it use alters the course of glaucoma, preclude recommending this drug in any form for the treatment of glaucoma at the present time.

■ PTSD...

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Is this medicine?

- Should lawmakers really be deciding what society calls "medicine?"
 - Public health implications? Perceived risk?
- Why are we doing an end-around the FDA?
 - And what are the consequences?

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Healthcare before science: Why do clinical trials matter?

THE THALIDOMIDE TRAGEDY: LESSONS FOR DRUG SAFETY AND REGULATION

By: Bara Fintel, Athena T. Samaras, Edson Carias



Many children in the 1960's, like the kindergartner pictured above, were born with phocomelia as a side effect of the drug thalidomide, resulting in the shortening or absence of limbs. (Photo by Leonard McCombe//Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)

Opioid Substitute?

Effect of cannabis use in people with chronic non-cancer pain prescribed opioids: findings from a 4-year prospective cohort study

Lancet Public Health 2018; 3: e341–50

Gabrielle Campbell, Wayne D Hall, Amy Peacock, Nicholas Lintzeris, Raimondo Bruna, Briony Larence, Suzanne Nielsen, Milton Cohen, Gary Chan, Richard P Mattick, Fiona Blyth, Marian Shanahan, Timothy Dobbins, Michael Farrell, Louisa Degenhardt

Interpretation Cannabis use was common in people with chronic non-cancer pain who had been prescribed opioids, but we found no evidence that cannabis use improved patient outcomes. People who used cannabis had greater pain and lower self-efficacy in managing pain, and there was no evidence that cannabis use reduced pain severity or interference or exerted an opioid-sparing effect. As cannabis use for medicinal purposes increases globally, it is important that large well designed clinical trials, which include people with complex comorbidities, are conducted to determine the efficacy of cannabis for chronic non-cancer pain.

Medical Marijuana Users are More Likely to Use Prescription Drugs Medically and Nonmedically

> Theodore L. Caputi, BS and Keith Humphreys, PhD | Addict Med • Volume 12, Number 4, July/August 2018

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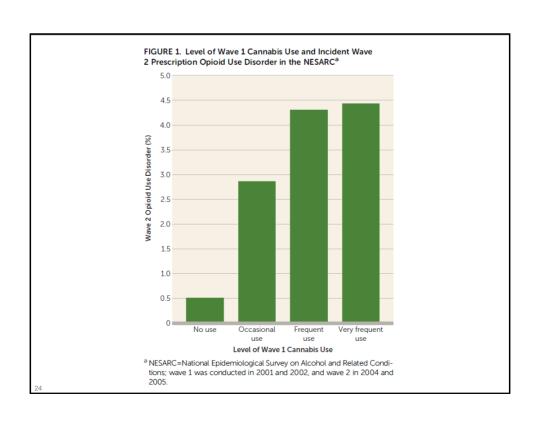
Association between medical cannabis laws and opioid overdose mortality has reversed over time

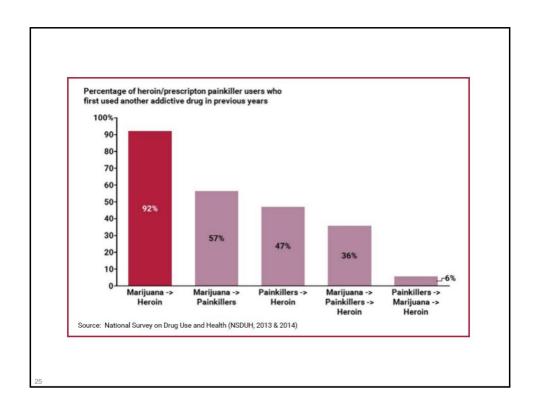


Chelsea L. Shover, Corey S. Davis, Sanford C. Gordon, and Keith Humphreys

PNAS June 25, 2019 116 (26) 12624-12626; first published June 10, 2019 https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1903434116

et al.'s analysis through 2017. Not only did findings from the original analysis not hold over the lenger period, but the association between state medical cannabis laws and opioid overdose mortality reversed direction from –21% to +23% and remained positive after accessiting for recreational cannabis laws. We also succeed no evidence that either broader (recreational) or more restrictive (low-tetrahydrocannabinol) cannabis laws were associated with changes in opioid overdose mortality. We find it unlikely that medical





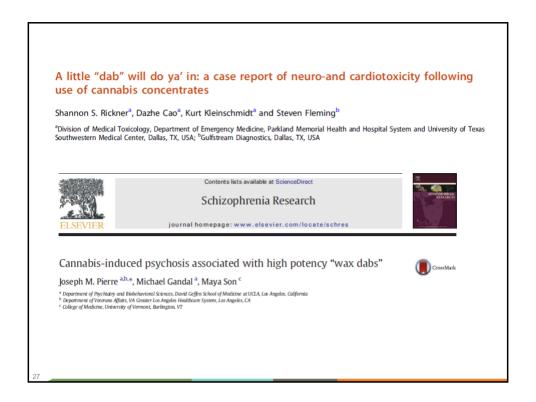


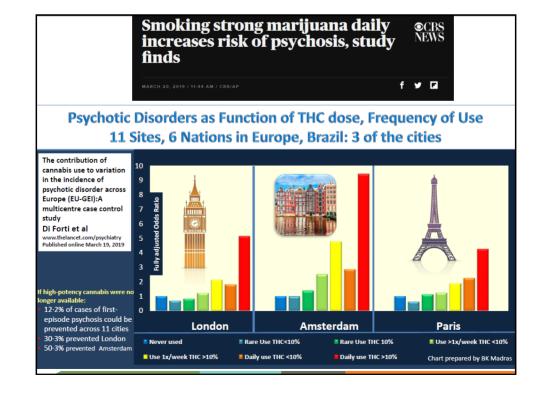
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ER visits linked to marijuana rose at Colorado hospital after legalization, study finds

People who consume marijuana edibles may be ingesting unsafe levels because they don't feel the immediate high, researcher says.

March 25, 2019, 4:30 PM CDT By Shamard Charles, M.D.



He loved weed. Then the vomiting began. Months later, he died

Shari Rudavsky, Indianapolis Star Published 2:48 p.m. ET Sept. 20, 2019 | Updated 4:00 p.m. ET Sept. 20, 2019

What messages are customers receiving?

Marijuana shops recommend products to pregnant women, against doctors' warnings

By Michael Nedelman, CNN ① Updated 6:05 AM ET, Thu May 10, 2018 Obstetrics: Original Research

Recommendations From Cannabis Dispensaries About First-Trimester Cannabis Use





SE NEWS

Betsy Dickson, MD, Chanel Mansfield, MPH, Maryam Guiahi, MD, MS, Amanda A. Allshouse, MS, Laura M. Borgelt, FharmD, Jeanelle Sheeder, FhD, Robert M. Silver, MD, and Torri D. Metz, MD, MS

Is cannabis safe to take during pregnancy?

- "Different people opinions, kind of like alcohol; I used to be a bartender and it is legal to serve someone who is pregnant because it is up to them so you know. I am not here to tell you you should or should not use, does that make sense. I do know a lot of people that do use cannabis during their pregnancy though and for what they have found, there has not been side effects that they can see,"
- "I know a lot of doctors are recommending marijuana nowadays."
- "We have a girl that comes in and she is probably 6 months pregnant and she smokes bud but she does not smoke it as much as she did but she still does...she said her doctor said it was ok...she said the doctor said that but I am not a doctor...I know aspirin is ok for babies and that is pretty much what you are getting is an aspirin that is probably better."

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Marijuana - Health and Safety Impact

Negative health impact

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Table 1. Adverse Effects of Short-Term Use and Long-Term or Heavy Use

Effects of short-term use

of Marijuana.

Impaired short-term memory, making it difficult to learn and to retain infor-

Impaired motor coordination, interfering with driving skills and increasing the risk of injuries

Altered judgment, increasing the risk of sexual behaviors that facilitate the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases

In high doses, paranoia and psychosis

Effects of long-term or heavy use

Addiction (in about 9% of users overall, 17% of those who begin use in adolescence, and 25 to 50% of those who are daily users)*

Altered brain development*

Poor educational outcome, with increased likelihood of dropping out of school*

Cognitive impairment, with lower IQ among those who were frequent users during adolescence*

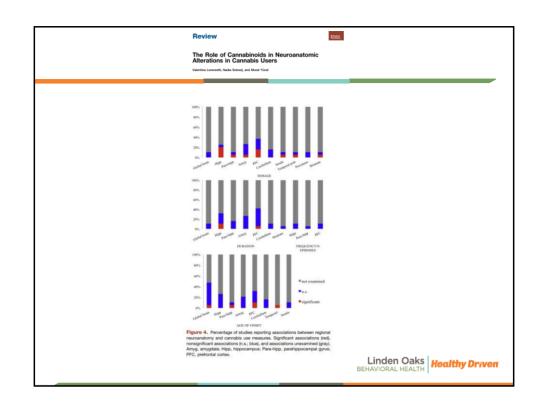
Diminished life satisfaction and achievement (determined on the basis of subjective and objective measures as compared with such ratings in the general population)*

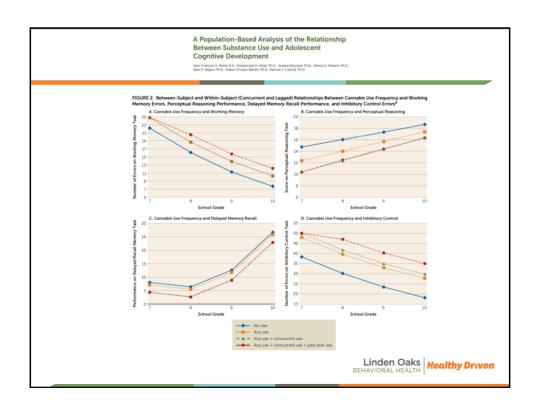
Symptoms of chronic bronchitis

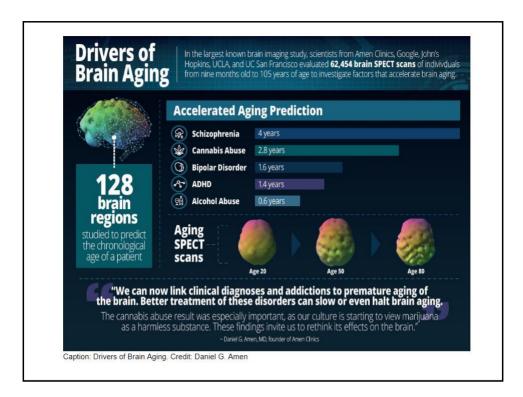
Increased risk of chronic psychosis disorders (including schizophrenia) in persons with a predisposition to such disorders

* The effect is strongly associated with initial marijuana use early in adolescence.

(Volkow et al., 2014)











The mysterious spike in respiratory illnesses is a reminder that ecigarettes may be more dangerous than they seem.

By Julia Belluz \mid @juliaoftoronto \mid julia.belluz@voxmedia.com \mid Sep 3, 2019, 2:20pm EDT

City of Milwaukee urges residents to stop vaping 'immediately'; 89% of Wisconsin sick cite THC



First death linked to vaping reported in Illinois



3 24 August 2019

The New Hork Times

The Washington Post

Bronx Teenager's Death Is the Youngest Vaping Fatality in U.S.

The 17-year-old who died last week is the youngest of 23 people to die nationwide of a vaping-related lung illness.

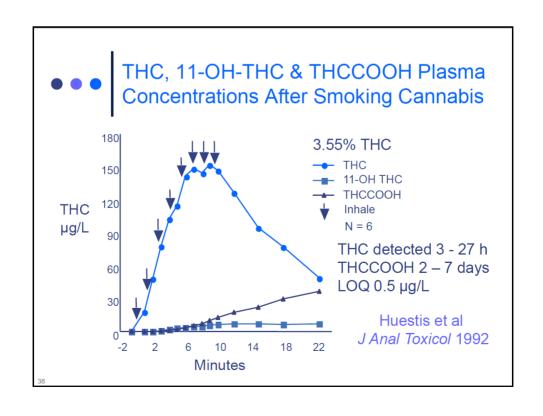
Vaping lung injuries top 1,000 cases as deaths rise to 18

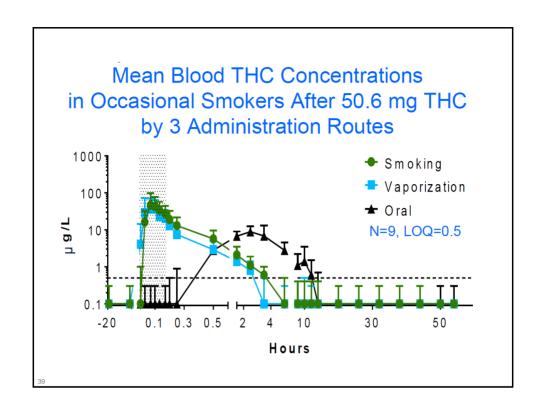
Health officials are amplifying their recommendation that people refrain from using ecigarettes or vaping, particularly products containing THC

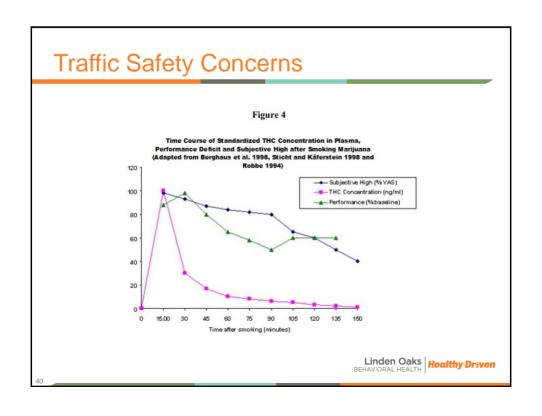
Marijuana - Health and Safety Impact

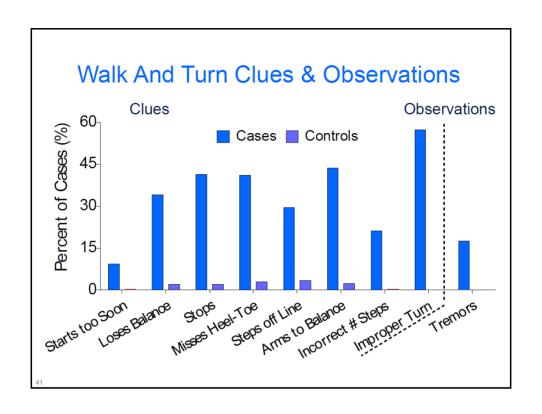
- Negative health impact
- Impaired motor function
 - -Traffic safety concerns
 - Detection concerns

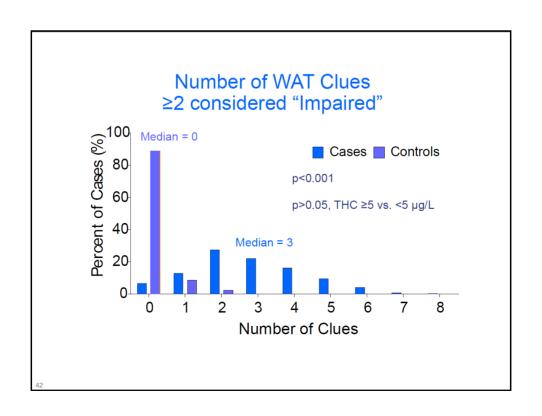
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Medical Cannabis Patients Driving While High

Driving under the influence of cannabis among medical cannabis patients with chronic pain

Erin E. Bonar^{a,b,*}, James A. Cranford^a, Brooke J. Arterberry^{a,c}, Maureen A. Walton^{a,b}, Kipling M. Bohnert^{a,d}, Mark A. Ilgen^{a,d}

In the past 6 months...

- 56.4% endorsed driving within 2h of use
- 50.5% endorsed driving while "a little high"
- 21.5% endorsed driving while "very high"
- US base rate 16+ for driving high in the past year: 4.3%

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To Recap: Delivery System

- How is medicine approved for the public?
 - Replicated science, multi-phase FDA trials
- How is medicine prescribed?
 - Dose, frequency, type, concentration
- How is medicine produced?
 - Uniform, standardized
- Do we smoke any medicine you're aware of?
 - Or use bongs, butane torches, vape pens, etc.
- What demographic do the products appear to be marketed at?

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Marketing



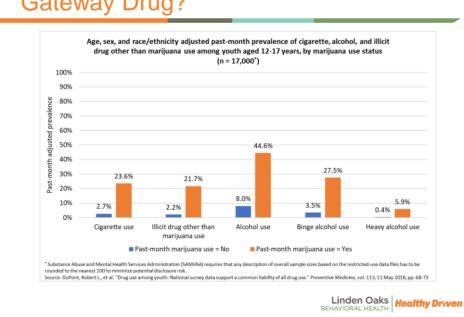


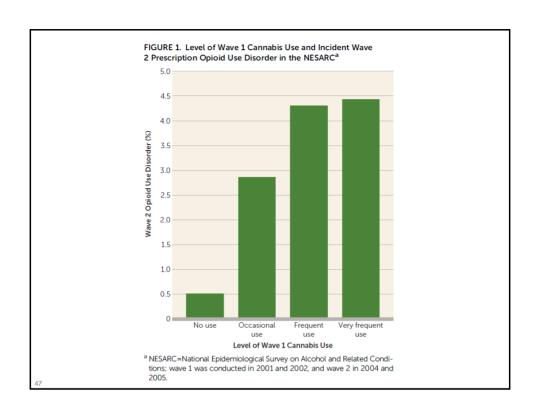
Have you ever looked at what product is actually being sold?

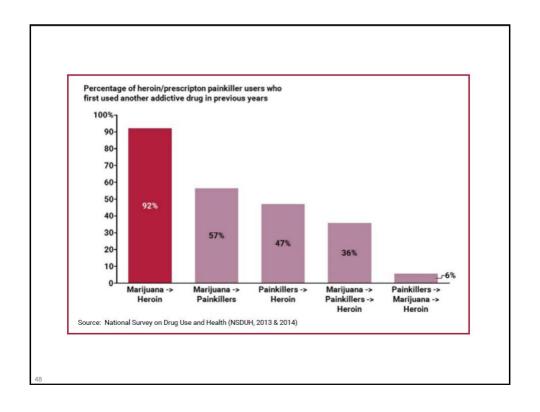
- Local Example / Another Local Example

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Gateway Drug?







Gateway Drug?

Drug and Alcohol Dependence 194 (2019) 51-58

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Drug and Alcohol Dependence

iournal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/drugalcdep

Full length article

Historical trends in the grade of onset and sequence of cigarette, alcohol, and marijuana use among adolescents from 1976-2016: Implications for "Gateway" patterns in adolescence

Katherine M. Keyesa,b,*, Caroline Rutherford, Richard Miechc

^a Department of Epidemiology, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia Unit ^b Center for Research on Society and Health, Universidad Mayor, Santiago, Chi ^c Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

Conclusion: Marijuana is increasingly the first substance in the sequence of adolescent drug use. Reducing adolescent smoking has been a remarkable achievement of the past 20 years; those who continue to smoke are at higher risk for progression to marijuana use.

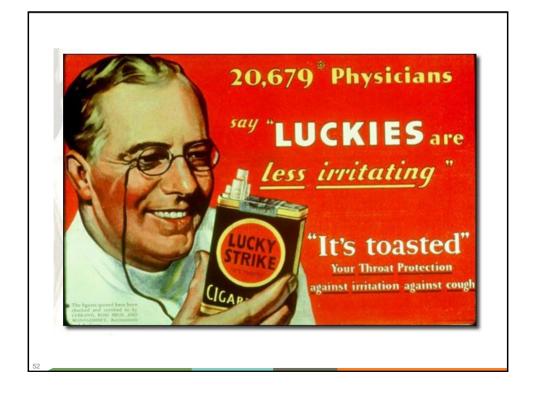
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So what's this all about then?

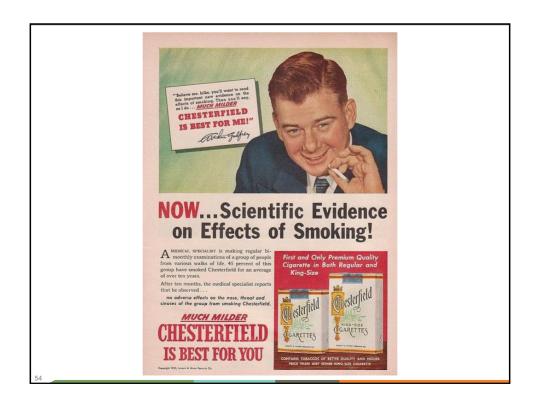
- To review...
 - Lack of quality evidence to support most medical claims
 - Dispensing system that is unspecific and promotes self-medication
 - Selling concentrates that have up to 70% THC (93% in Illinois)
 - Low age for entry, products that can appeal to kids and young adults
- Do these ads look familiar?

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Marijuana: Bottom Line

- Actual science-based therapeutic applications for cannabinoids are present, but limited
 - The distinction between marijuana and cannabinoids is critical
- The delivery system is not consistent with current models for healthcare, promoting speculative treatment, poor product choices, self-medication, and potential resale to youth
- There are numerous health & safety concerns related to marijuana use, particularly for youth and young adults
 - Addiction, brain development, achievement, psychosis, drug sequencing, vaping & road safety
- Our perspective has shifted on drugs before...

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 - Addiction, brain development, achievement, psychosis, drug sequencing, & road safety
 - Our perspective has shifted on drugs before......let's go in with eyes open this time.

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