

WHAT RISK DO CANNABIS USERS RUN OF DEVELOPING CANNABIS USE DISORDERS? A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND META-ANALYSIS

Authors: Janni Leung^{1,2,3}, Gary C. K. Chan³, Leanne Hides^{1,3}, Wayne D. Hall³

Presenter's email: j.leung1@uq.edu.au

¹*School of Psychology, Lives Lived Well Group, The University of Queensland, Australia,*
²*National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, Sydney, Australia,* ³*Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research, The University of Queensland, Australia*

Introduction / Issues OR Introduction and Aims: A widely cited estimate of the lifetime cannabis dependence risk among users is based on a 27 years-old cross-sectional survey. Given the rapid changes in the legal status and regulation of cannabis in the past decade, it is critical to have better and more current estimates of the risks of this potential negative consequence of cannabis use.

Method / Approach OR Design and Methods: We conducted a systematic review of studies in the past 10 years that provide estimates of the proportion of cannabis users who met criteria for cannabis dependence (CD) or cannabis use disorders (CUD).

Key Findings OR Results: From 1277 studies screened, 16 studies were eligible (8 longitudinal and 10 cross-sectional analyses; 15 used DSM-IV). Meta-analyses showed that 12% (7-18%) of lifetime cannabis users develop CD and 25% (22-28%) develop a CUD. Meta-regression risks were higher in more frequent cannabis users (daily/weekly), young people, CIDI (vs SCID) assessed CUD, and in Australasian studies rather than those in the USA and Europe.

Discussions and Conclusions: People who use cannabis have 1 in 4 risk of developing CUD (abuse or dependence) and 1 in 10 risk of CD; the risks increases with heavier use.

Implications for Practice or Policy (optional): Cannabis users need to be informed about the risks of developing dependence and a use disorder, especially those who initiate early and use frequently during young adulthood.

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