

The Prevalence of Cannabis Use Disorders in People Who Use Medicinal Cannabis: A Systematic Review And Meta-Analysis

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Introduction: There has been a significant increase in the prescription of medicinal cannabis over the last 5 years. Despite the surge in popularity, there is a range of risk factors associated with medicinal cannabis use including cannabis use disorders. Previous literature suggests that people who use cannabis for recreational reasons have a 1 in 3 risk of developing cannabis use disorders. The current systematic review and meta-analysis aimed to investigate the prevalence of cannabis use disorders in people who use medicinal cannabis.

Method: A comprehensive search was conducted in PubMed, EMBASE and PsycINFO databases in addition to grey literature. Search terms related to 'medicinal cannabis', 'cannabis use disorder' and 'prevalence' were used. Studies that reported medicinal cannabis use were selected, while studies on recreational cannabis use exclusively were excluded. Prevalence data on cannabis use disorder in people who use medicinal cannabis was extracted.

Results: The study included 12 studies for the narrative, systematic review and 9 studies for the quantitative meta-analysis. Among people who use cannabis medicinally, the pooled prevalence of cannabis use disorders in the past 12 months was estimated to be 27% [95%CI (0.19-0.35)] across the included nine studies. The narrative summary revealed factors associated with a higher risk of developing cannabis use disorders. These were being younger in age, identifying as a male, using cannabis flower compared to other products, administering cannabis via inhalation compared to oral or topical and using medicinal cannabis for a mental health condition.

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