

Average intoxication as a proxy for cannabis use



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Introduction

- Challenges inherent in assessing cannabis use include a lack of standardized doses, differing product potencies, and an overreliance on self-report^{1,2}
- Quantity of cannabis used may relate to experiences of consequences,^{3,4} but individuals may not accurately recall or report their use^{1,5}
- Understanding correlates of cannabis problems is critical to intervention efforts

The Present Study:

To determine whether average cannabis intoxication levels might better predict problems than quantity or frequency of use

Methods

Participants

- Recruited across 9 surveys spanning 8 years (2011 - 2019)
- Respondents included members of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), university students, and individuals recruited through social media
- All participants reported using cannabis at least 6 days per week

N	2,659
Mean age	34.08
% female	38.1%
% Caucasian	84.8%

Measures

- Demographics
- Cannabis Use (Quantity per month in ounces)
- Average Cannabis Intoxication (0 “Not at all” – 6 “Extremely high”)
- Cannabis-Associated Problems Questionnaire (CAPQ)⁶

Results

- On average, participants reported using 1.12 ounces of cannabis monthly ($SD = .35$ ounces, Range = less than 1/8 ounce to more than 3 ounces), attaining a moderate level of intoxication ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.21$, Range = 0-6), and experiencing a mild amount of cannabis problems ($M = 8.21$, $SD = 9.08$).
- Pearson correlations demonstrated significant relations between CAPQ scores and intoxication but not CAPQ scores and quantity consumed per month

	1	2	3
1. CAPQ Scores	1.00		
2. Quantity per month	.005	1.00	
3. Average intoxication	.153*	.086*	1.00

Note. * $p < .001$

- A comparison of correlation coefficients⁷ revealed that average intoxication had a larger correlation with CAPQ scores than quantity of cannabis consumed per month ($Z = -5.53$, $p < .001$).

Discussion

- In a large sample of near daily cannabis users, average intoxication significantly covaried with cannabis problems while quantity of cannabis used per month did not.
- The correlation between average intoxication and cannabis problems significantly exceeded the correlation between quantity per month and problems.
- Individuals might more accurately remember their experiences of being high as opposed to recalling exactly how much they consumed over a month’s span.
- Future work should continue to examine relations between intoxication and other indices of cannabis use to confirm and extend our findings.

References

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