



Medicinal Cannabis Use and Driving by Clients of NSW Health Cannabis Clinics

Investigators:

Adrian Dunlop	Melissa Jackson
Amanda Brown	Nick Lintzeris
Richard Clancy	Raimondo Bruno
Jennifer Johnston	Nghi Phung
Steve Childs	Iain McGregor
Jenny Bowman	Lauren Monds
Jennifer Luksza	Jack Wilson



Background

- Research completed as part of the larger study:

Kronic in the Clinic: The use of Synthetic Cannabinoids by NSW Cannabis Clinic Clients

- Explored the perceptions and experiences of treatment seeking cannabis users regarding their cannabis and synthetic cannabinoid use.
- 154 participants from specialised cannabis treatment clinics of five participating NSW Health Local Health Districts
- Inclusion criteria: Treatment seeking users of cannabis



Method



- Recruitment Timeline June 2015 to April 2016
- Interviews:
 - Conducted face-to-face
 - Retrospective, structured questionnaires included:
 - Demographic information
 - Drug use history
 - Drug Use Motives (DUMQ) for cannabis & synthetic cannabinoids
 - Acute subjective effects of cannabis & synthetic cannabinoid use
 - Cannabis dependence (ICD-10)
 - Medical cannabis use
 - Driving and cannabis & synthetic cannabinoid use
 - Physical health and Quality of Life (SF-36v2)
 - Mental Health (DASS-21)
 - Reasons for and for not using synthetic cannabinoids
 - Comparison of synthetic cannabinoids & cannabis



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Method



- We explored:
 - Cannabis and synthetic cannabinoid use history and patterns
 - Effects and consequences of cannabis and synthetic cannabinoid use
 - Use of cannabis for medicinal purposes
 - Frequency of driving under the influence of cannabis and synthetic cannabinoids



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Demographics



Demographic	Total (n = 154)
Age <i>Median (IQR)</i>	35 (10)
Age Range <i>n (%)</i>	
18 - 35	80 (52%)
36+	74 (48%)
Male <i>n (%)</i>	110 (71%)
Education ≤ Year 10 <i>n (%)</i>	84 (55%)
ATSI status <i>n (%)</i>	16 (11%)
Single relationship status <i>n (%)</i>	110 (72%)
Live Alone <i>n (%)</i>	106 (69%)
Government benefits <i>n (%)</i>	113 (73%)

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Use of Cannabis for Medicinal Purposes



- Medicinal use of cannabis
 - Was cannabis used to reduce the symptoms of a physical or mental health condition?
 - If so, what type of condition?
 - Use of cannabis for general pain reduction
 - Age of first medicinal use
 - Duration of medicinal use
 - Reasons for stopping



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Use of Cannabis for Medicinal Purposes



- Of 154 users of cannabis, 59% reported using cannabis to reduce the symptoms of physical or mental illness (91/154)
- 70% reported using for general pain relief (83/118)
- Median age of first medicinal use = 20 years (IQR 9)
- 59% reported duration of use > 5 years (58/98)



Use of Cannabis for Medicinal Purposes



Condition *	N †	(%)	Effectiveness # % Quite and Extremely (n)
Depression	55	60.4	61.1% (33)
Anxiety	19	20.9	52.6% (10)
Chronic pain	17	18.7	64.7% (11)
Nausea	8	8.8	100% (8)
Migraine	7	7.7	71.4% (5)
Weight loss	4	4.4	75.0% (3)
Other	27	29.7	66.7% (18)
General Pain ^	82	70.3	63.9% (53)

Effectiveness range: 0 = Not, 1 = Slightly, 2 = Moderately, 3 = Quite, 4 = Extremely

* Multiple responses allowed

† Total N = 91

^ Total N = 118

Use of Cannabis for Medicinal Purposes



- 51% participants reported current use of cannabis for medicinal purposes (46/91)

Reasons for stopping medicinal use	% (n) †
Problems with dependence	51% (43)
Medical condition went away	16% (7)
Did not reduce symptoms of illness	9% (4)
Stopped working	9% (4)
Relationship problems	7% (3)
Illegal Status	4% (2)
Unacceptable side-effects	4% (2)
Other	13% (6)

† N = 45; multiple responses allowed

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Driving under the influence



- Driving under the influence of cannabis and synthetic cannabinoids
 - Ever driven ?
 - Ever driven within 3 hours of using either substance ?
 - If so, how often ?



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Driving and Cannabis

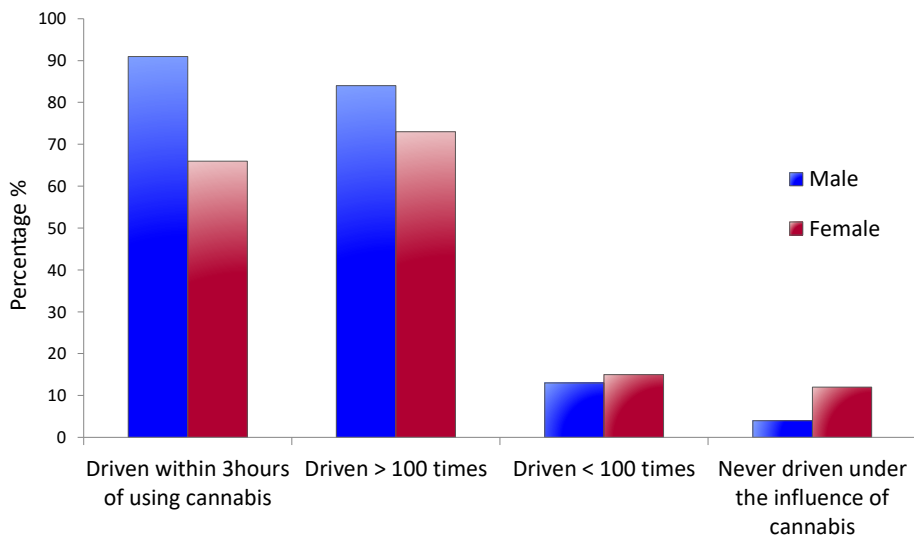


- Of the 154 participants, 89% ($n=137$) had ever driven.
- Of these:
 - 94% reported ever driving within three hours of consuming cannabis (129/137)
 - 81% reported driving more than 100 times (111/137)
 - 6% had never driven whilst under the influence of cannabis (8/137)
- Figures reflect a high prevalence of driving



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Driving and Cannabis



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Driving and Synthetic Cannabinoids



- Of 154 participants, 53% (n = 82) had used synthetic cannabinoids
- Of these:
 - 90% of these had ever driven (74/82)
 - 51% reported driving within three hours of consuming synthetic cannabinoids (38/74)
 - 24% reported driving more than 100 times (18/74)
 - 46% reported never driving whilst under the influence of synthetic cannabinoids (34/74)



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Summary



- Use of medical cannabis by clients attending cannabis clinics is common – 59%
 - Depression, anxiety and pain are most common reasons
 - Dependence was a concern for ~1/2 sampled population
- Driving under the influence of cannabis by clients attending cannabis clinics was almost universal
 - 94% within 3 hours, many frequently
 - 51% of synthetic cannabis users within 3 hours – concerning re effects

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Thank you



Questions?





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