

Topic

Polysubstance Use Disorders in
Individuals with Cannabis Use Disorder:
Results from a Nationally
Representative Sample (NESARC)

Key question

In adults aged 18 and older diagnosed with Cannabis Use Disorder, how do those with polysubstance use disorders differ in social and clinical presentations compared to those with CUD only based on a nationally representative U.S. sample?

Project aims

Cannabis use disorder (CUD) is one of the most common substance use disorders (SUD) worldwide and is frequently associated with high rates of polysubstance use; however, despite rising rates of polysubstance use disorders (PUD), the characteristics of individuals with both CUD and PUD remain unclear. This study examined the social and clinical characteristics of adults diagnosed with CUD and comorbid PUD. It also assessed how childhood maltreatment and relevant psychiatric disorders are associated with the likelihood of developing PUD among individuals with CUD. We assessed 972 individuals with past-year diagnosis of CUD, using various statistical methods to summarize social and clinical presentations and examine factors contributing to PUD.

Key findings

- Among CUD individuals, majority used at least one other substance in the past year, with one third (1/3) using two or more.
- Polysubstance groups experienced significantly more severe childhood maltreatment than the cannabis use disorder group only.
- Polysubstance use disorders were common among individuals with CUD, with almost two-thirds of those affected also having a mood and/or personality disorder.

Helpful terms

- **Cannabis use disorder:** a medical diagnosis describing a pattern of cannabis (marijuana) use that causes distress and/or impairs a person's life.
- **Polysubstance use:** the use of two or more substances (excluding caffeine, tobacco, and nicotine) within the past year, either on separate occasions or at the same time.

Principal investigator: Dr. Bernard Le Foll, PhD, MD, MCFP (AM)

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