

New study suggests minimal relationship between cannabis and schizophrenia or psychosis

October 22 2009

Last year the UK government reclassified cannabis from a class C to a class B drug, partly out of concerns that cannabis, especially the more potent varieties, may increase the risk of schizophrenia in young people. But the evidence for the relationship between cannabis and schizophrenia or psychosis remains controversial. A new study has determined that it may be necessary to stop thousands of cannabis users in order to prevent a single case of schizophrenia.

Scientists from Bristol, Cambridge and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine took the latest information on numbers of cannabis users, the risk of developing [schizophrenia](#), and the risk that cannabis use causes schizophrenia to estimate how many cannabis users may need to be stopped to prevent one case of schizophrenia.

The study found it would be necessary to stop 2800 heavy cannabis users in young men and over 5000 heavy cannabis users in young women to prevent a single case of schizophrenia. Among light cannabis users, those numbers rise to over 10,000 young men and nearly 30,000 young women to prevent one case of schizophrenia.

That's just part of the story. Interventions to prevent cannabis use typically do not succeed for every person who is treated. Depending on how effective an intervention is at preventing cannabis use, it would be necessary to treat even higher numbers of users to achieve the thousands

of successful results necessary to prevent a very few cases of schizophrenia.

Matt Hickman, one of the authors of the report published last week in the scholarly journal *Addiction*, said that "preventing cannabis use is important for many reasons - including reducing tobacco and drug dependence and improving school performance. But our evidence suggests that focusing on schizophrenia may have been misguided. Our research cannot resolve the question whether cannabis causes schizophrenia, but does show that many people need to give up cannabis in order to have an impact on the number of people with schizophrenia. The likely impact of re-classifying [cannabis](#) in the UK on schizophrenia or [psychosis](#) incidence is very uncertain."

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: New study suggests minimal relationship between cannabis and schizophrenia or psychosis (2009, October 22) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-10-minimal-relationship-cannabis-schizophrenia-psychosis.html>

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