

Study shows increased adult marijuana use and binge drinking in states that legalize medical marijuana

May 7 2015

Researchers from Emory's Rollins School of Public Health found an increase in adult marijuana use and binge drinking after the implementation of medical marijuana laws (MML) in ten states that permit marijuana use for medical purposes.

The study findings suggest that state MML implementation between 2004 and 2012 led to a 14 percent increase in past-month marijuana use and an 18 percent increase in marijuana abuse/dependence among adults aged 21 or above. MML implementation was also associated with a 10 percent increase in binge drinking among adults of [legal drinking age](#).

"Even if we assume that the increases in marijuana use come from those who use the drug for legitimate medical purposes, our results indicate that MML implementation could result in increases in marijuana abuse/dependence and [binge drinking](#)," explains Hefei Wen, PhD candidate, of the Department of Health Policy and Management at Emory's Rollins School of Public Health, "These potential [public health](#) consequences may impose considerable economic and social costs on the society."

Findings did not suggest any discernible effects of MMLs on either underage drinking among those aged 12-20 nor other substance use (i.e., non-medical use of prescription pain medication, heroin use, and cocaine use) in both age groups.

"States contemplating MMLs and other similar liberalization policies should consider a proactive approach to mitigate the undesirable effects of [marijuana](#) liberalization," says Wen.

More information: "The effect of medical marijuana laws on adolescent and adult use of marijuana, alcohol, and other substances," *Journal of Health Economics*, Volume 42, July 2015, Pages 64-80, ISSN 0167-6296, [dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2015.03.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2015.03.007)

Provided by Emory University

Citation: Study shows increased adult marijuana use and binge drinking in states that legalize medical marijuana (2015, May 7) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-05-adult-marijuana-binge-states-legalize.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.