

Study finds that improvements are needed for edible marijuana product labels to ensure safety

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Credit: RTI International

Pot brownies may be a thing of the past as there are new edible marijuana products, or edibles, on the market, including chocolates, candies, and cookies. These products are legally sold in Colorado and Washington, and according to a new study conducted by RTI International, changes to their labels are needed to ensure people know what they are consuming and that they are safely consuming the products.

The new study published in the *International Journal of Drug Policy*, found that many of the adults who participated in the study are not reading labels, and if they are, information is often hard to decipher.

"We discovered that people think there is too much information listed on the labels of edibles, thus potentially overlooking important information on consumption advice" said Sheryl C. Cates, corresponding author of the study and senior research policy analyst at RTI. "Our study also determined that labels often do not make it clear that the product contains [marijuana](#), which can lead to accidental ingestion."

Researchers conducted four focus groups in Denver and Seattle with 94 adult consumers and nonconsumers. Participants revealed concerns with edible labels, and suggested that more needs to be done to inform and educate consumers and nonconsumers about the possible risks of edibles.

In 2012, Colorado and Washington became the first two states in the United States to legalize marijuana for recreational use with retail sales starting in 2014. According to the Colorado Department of Revenue, edibles accounted for nearly half of total marijuana sales in the state for 2014. In Washington, edibles accounted for about 40 percent of marijuana sales according to Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board (reported in 2016).

"As the popularity of edibles grow, it is important that labels clearly and

concisely provide consumers important information," Cates said. "Web- and video-based education and using graphics on [labels](#) may be easy, cost-effective ways to inform buyers and the public."

Since conducting this research, the states of Colorado and Washington have changed some of the requirements for labeling of edibles based on increasing public concern. Lessons learned from Colorado and Washington, can help inform the labeling of edibles as additional states allow the sale of edibles for recreational use.

More information: Katherine M. Kosa et al, Consumer use and understanding of labelling information on edible marijuana products sold for recreational use in the states of Colorado and Washington, *International Journal of Drug Policy* (2017). [DOI: 10.1016/j.drugpo.2017.01.006](#)

Provided by RTI International

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