

# Marijuana legalization may reduce opioid use

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(HealthDay)—State implementation of medical marijuana laws is

associated with a reduction in the rate of opioid prescribing, according to a study published online April 2 in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

Hefei Wen, Ph.D., from the University of Kentucky College of Public Health in Lexington, and Jason M. Hockenberry, Ph.D., from the Emory University Rollins School of Public Health in Atlanta, compared opioid prescribing laws between states that started to implement medical and adult-use marijuana laws between 2011 and 2016 and the remaining states. Data were included for all Medicaid fee-for-service and managed care enrollees, which was a population at high risk for chronic pain, opioid use disorder, and [opioid overdose](#).

The researchers found that there was a 5.88 percent lower rate of opioid prescribing seen in association with state implementation of [medical marijuana laws](#). The implementation of adult-use [marijuana laws](#) correlated with a 6.38 percent lower rate of opioid prescribing.

"The potential of marijuana liberalization to reduce the use and consequences of prescription opioids among Medicaid enrollees deserves consideration during the policy discussions about marijuana reform and the [opioid epidemic](#)," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text Editorial](#)

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