

# How common is cannabis use among young adult cancer patients?

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Cannabis can help alleviate some of the symptoms of cancer and its treatment, and a new study examines the prevalence of its use among young adult cancer patients now that medical cannabis is becoming increasingly available. The demographic and clinical factors likely to correlate with cannabis use and differences in moderate to severe

symptoms between users and non-users are reported in a study published in *Journal of Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology (JAYAO)*.

Kristine Donovan, Ph.D., MBA and colleagues from Moffitt Cancer Center, Tampa, FL coauthored the article entitled "Cannabis Use in Young Adult Cancer Patients." On [urine drug testing](#) for a breakdown product of cannabis, they showed that 30% of young adult cancer patients ages 18 to 39 tested positive. The researchers report that this prevalence rate of [cannabis use](#) is higher than for young adults in the general population and adult cancer patients seeking specialized symptom management. Young adult cannabis users were more likely to be male and, surprisingly, to report having more [severe symptoms](#), including pain, nausea, lack of appetite, constipation, and difficulty sleeping.

Editor-in-Chief of *JAYAO* Leonard S. Sender, MD, CHOC Children's Hospital Hyundai Cancer Institute, Orange, CA, states: "As cannabis becomes legal for medical and recreational use in more states, it is increasingly important that its use in cancer patients is evidence-based. More research is needed into premorbidity and effectiveness relative to other pharmacological agents."

**More information:** Kristine A. Donovan et al, Cannabis Use in Young Adult Cancer Patients, *Journal of Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology* (2019). [DOI: 10.1089/jayao.2019.0039](https://doi.org/10.1089/jayao.2019.0039)

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