

1 in 5 marijuana users struggle with dependency on the drug

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Cannabis use disorder is a very real problem for a significant percentage of people who use marijuana, new research suggests.

About 21% of those who use weed struggle with dependency, including recurring problems socially and with work, the study published Aug. 29 in the journal *JAMA Network Open* found. About 6.5% of those with this disorder had moderate to severe cases.

"The results here underscore the importance of assessing patient cannabis use and CUD [[cannabis use disorder](#)] symptoms in medical settings," the study concluded.

Researchers from the University of Washington and the Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute used data from nearly 1,500 [primary care patients](#) in Washington state, where [recreational use](#) is legal.

The study found that those with more severe dependency tended to use the drug recreationally. Less severe use that was still problematic was evenly divided between medical and recreational use.

Just over 42% of users in the study were doing so for medical reasons. Meanwhile, 25% were non-medical users, and about 32% were both recreational and medical users.

Those dependent on cannabis tended to have increased tolerance, craving and uncontrolled escalation of use.

The latest findings mirror [earlier research](#) on the high risk of becoming dependent, particularly "among those who initiate early and use frequently during adolescence."

As [marijuana legalization](#) has spread, the drug's use is also increasing. Treatment for cannabis use disorder includes detoxification, abstinence and other treatments for addiction, the *New York Times* reported.

More information: Gwen T. Lapham et al, Prevalence of Cannabis Use Disorder and Reasons for Use Among Adults in a US State Where Recreational Cannabis Use Is Legal, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.28934](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.28934)

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