

Cannabis use disorder may be linked to increased risk of cardiovascular disease

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A new study has found that Canadian adults with cannabis use disorder appear to have an approximately 60% higher risk of experiencing their first heart attack, stroke, or other major cardiovascular event than those

without cannabis use disorder.

The study, published in *Addiction*, measured the association between problematic marijuana use and the first-time occurrence of adverse cardiovascular disease events such as heart attack, stroke, cardiac dysrhythmias, and [peripheral vascular disease](#).

Researchers used five Canadian health databases to create a cohort of nearly 60,000 participants, half with a [cannabis use disorder](#) diagnosis and half without, matched by gender, year of birth, and time of presentation to the health system. People with prior adverse cardiovascular disease events were excluded. The participants were tracked from January 2012 to December 2019. Among people with cannabis use disorder, 2.4% (721) experienced a first-time cardiovascular disease event, compared with 1.5% (458) in the unexposed group.

Within the group of people with cannabis use disorder, people with no co-occurring medical illness, no prescriptions, and fewer than five visits to [health services](#) in the last six months had an even higher risk of a first-time cardiovascular disease event—approximately 1.4 times higher than for the rest of the cannabis-use-disorder group. This may be because those people considered themselves healthy and may not have acted on or even noticed the warning signs of an imminent [heart attack](#), stroke, or other major cardiovascular event.

Dr. Anees Bahji, lead author of the study, emphasized the significance of these findings for [public health](#) and clinical practice. "Our study doesn't provide enough information to say that cannabis use disorder causes adverse cardiovascular disease events, but we can go so far as to say that Canadians with cannabis use disorder appear to have a much higher risk of cardiovascular disease than people without the disorder."

The study contributes to the ongoing dialogue surrounding the health implications of cannabis use disorder and its potential links to cardiovascular health.

More information: Cannabis use disorder and adverse cardiovascular outcomes: a population-based retrospective cohort analysis of adults from Alberta, Canada, *Addiction* (2023). DOI: [10.1111/add.16337](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.16337). onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.16337

Provided by Society for the Study of Addiction

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