

# Pediatric resource use less likely with legalization of recreational cannabis, study finds

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In cases of cannabis intoxication in children, resource utilization is less likely in states with recreational legalization of cannabis, [according to a study](#) published online May 1 in *Pediatrics*.

Patrick S. Walsh, M.D., from the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, and colleagues conducted a cross-sectional study of the Pediatric Health Information System, including emergency department encounters between January 2016 and April 2023 for children aged younger than 6 years with cannabis ingestion to examine whether the legal status of recreational cannabis was associated with resource utilization outcomes.

Data were included for 3,649 children from 47 hospitals; 29 percent of encounters occurred in states where recreational cannabis was legal.

The researchers found that cannabis-legal locations had lower use of advanced imaging, [lumbar puncture](#), intensive care unit admission, and [mechanical ventilation](#) compared with environments where recreational cannabis was illegal (adjusted odds ratios, 0.65, 0.42, 0.71, and 0.30, respectively). Urine testing occurred more often where recreational cannabis was legal (adjusted odds ratio, 1.87).

"Our findings suggest the need for education on the early recognition and management of cannabis intoxication in [young children](#) and a focus on policies and procedures to minimize invasive and potentially harmful testing," the authors write.

**More information:** Patrick S. Walsh et al, Cannabis Legalization and Resource Use for Ingestions by Young Children, *Pediatrics* (2024). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2024-065881](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2024-065881)

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