

If cannabis use increases after legalization, government must alter the act

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If cannabis use increases after legalization of recreational cannabis on October 17, the Government of Canada should commit to changing the act to prevent negative health effects, argues an editorial in *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

"Given the known and unknown [health](#) hazards of cannabis, any increase in use of recreational cannabis after legalization, whether by adults or youth, should be viewed as a failure of this legislation," writes Dr. Diane Kelsall, Editor-in-Chief (Interim), CMAJ.

Health Canada reports that cannabis, a drug that is currently illegal for recreational purposes, will create issues in about one in three adult users and addiction in almost one in 10, with youth being more susceptible to [negative effects](#).

"The decision by the [federal government](#) to legalize cannabis sends a clear message to Canadians that its use is acceptable," Dr. Kelsall writes.

For Bill C-45 to fulfill its aim to ensure public health under legalization, the government must be vigilant in tracking cannabis usage, providing adequate funding to do this in all jurisdictions as well as to conduct research into harms.

"Finally, if the use of cannabis increases, the federal government should have the courage to admit the legislation is flawed and amend the act. Canadians—and the world—will be watching," the editorial concludes.

More information: Diane Kelsall. Watching Canada's experiment with legal cannabis, *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (2018). [DOI: 10.1503/cmaj.181287](https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.181287)

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