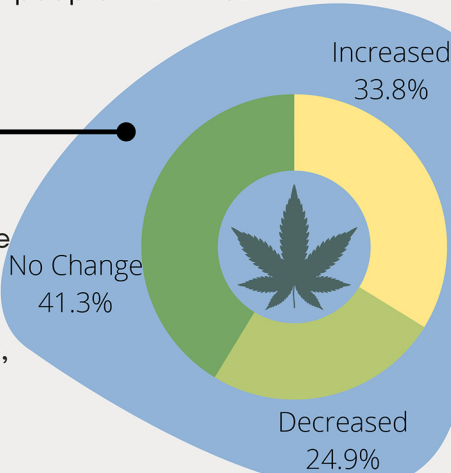


Covid-19 Reports: Cannabis Use and Mental Health in people with PTSD

One of the most common reasons for cannabis use for medical purposes is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Little is known about how changes in cannabis use, in the face of a major event like the pandemic, could influence stress, anxiety, and depression in people with PTSD.

Changes in Cannabis Use During the Pandemic

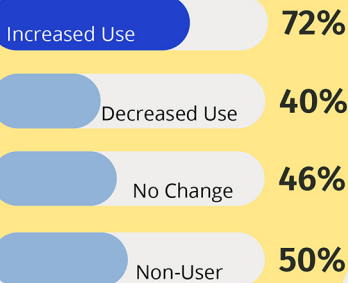
462 people with PTSD filled out the survey and gave some information on their cannabis use during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the cannabis users, 33.8% reported increased cannabis use, 24.9% decreased use, and 41.3% did not change their use.



Worsening in Stress and Anxiety Symptoms

During the pandemic, we saw significant similar increases in stress and anxiety regardless of cannabis use.

Worsening in Depression Symptoms



72% of people who increased their cannabis use during the pandemic experienced a concerning level of **worsening in depression symptoms** during the pandemic. This proportion was significantly higher than what was found in the other participants.

Cause or Effect?

While increased cannabis use could possibly contribute to worsening depression symptoms, it is also possible that cannabis could be more heavily used as a coping mechanism by people who are experiencing more severe depression. **More work is required to better understand this as we are not able to determine cause vs effect from this study.**



Different Relationships?

It is possible that the relationship between cannabis use and depression symptoms in people with PTSD *differs between those with severe depression and those with milder depression*. More research is needed to explore this.

Take-Away

Those who used cannabis but did not change their use frequency maintained the lowest depression scores throughout.

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Murkar, A., Kendzerska, T., Shlik, J., Quilty, L., Saad, M., & Robillard, R. (2022). Increased cannabis intake during the COVID-19 pandemic is associated with worsening of depression symptoms in people with PTSD. BMC psychiatry, 22(1), 1-11. DOI: [10.1186/s12888-022-04185-7](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-022-04185-7)