



The effectiveness of psychosocial interventions for cannabis use disorder

What is this research about?

Cannabis use disorder is the repeated use of cannabis that results in harmful consequences such as anxiety or impaired work performance.

This review looked at 23 different psychosocial interventions that were effective in improving outcomes for those living with cannabis use disorder. A psychosocial intervention is a type of treatment that focusses on the individual or their social environment. There are seven different intervention types:

- Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Motivational intervention (MET)
- MET and CBT Combo
- Contingency Management
- Social support
- Mindfulness-based meditation
- Drug education and counselling

The demand for health services assistance is increasing across the world. A systematic review of cannabis treatment studies is important because it can identify and evaluate interventions for treating cannabis use disorder. A systematic review is a summary of results from various studies and aims to provide an overarching response to all the data that was collected.

What you need to know:

One in six adolescent cannabis users and one in two daily cannabis users will fit the criteria for cannabis use disorder.

Using psychosocial interventions as a treatment option is somewhat effective in decreasing cannabis use and dependency in the short term compared to no treatment at all. Specifically, CBT group sessions combined with MET individual sessions are the most explored treatments and are shown to be the most effective.

What did the researchers do?

The researchers conducted a systematic review of 23 different studies on psychosocial interventions for cannabis use disorder and their effectiveness as treatments.

In total, the studies involved 4045 participants. The review assessed seven different interventions types (listed in the previous section) in comparison to delayed treatment or minimal treatment, as well as other alternative psychosocial treatments.



What did the researchers find?

The results from the review showed that using psychosocial interventions as a treatment option was somewhat effective in decreasing cannabis use and dependency in the short term compared to no treatment at all.

Specifically, CBT group sessions combined with MET individual sessions were the most explored treatments and were shown to be the most effective. However, these results were based on a short-term duration where the study lasted less than six months.

How can you use this research

Individuals with cannabis-related problems or who are seeking treatment to reduce their dependency on cannabis may benefit from this research. Researchers, clinicians, and other experts in the field may be interested in the results of the various intervention treatments and their overall effectiveness at decreasing cannabis use and minimizing overall dependency.

Limitations and next steps

Some limitations of the study included little to no variability in the study group, such as the majority of participants being white Caucasian males in their 20s and 30s. Furthermore, only a few studies were completed outside the U.S. Thus, it wasn't very clear how applicable these treatments would have been in other cultures. Next steps should include studies that look at long-term outcomes of interventions (longer than six months) which would

be a better measurement of the overall effectiveness of the interventions in the long term.

About the researchers

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This *Research Snapshot* responds to the need for evidence related to "Psychosocial interventions for cannabis use disorder." To learn more, visit [eenet.ca/initiatives/Sharing](https://www.eenet.ca/initiatives/Sharing). This summary was written by Michelle Kim