

Topic DAT18-10: Public Health Research on Cannabis

Purpose

To encourage research on the effects of changing cannabis laws and policies in the US and globally on public health.

Background

Policies around cannabis use in the United States (and globally) are changing rapidly, and far outpacing the knowledge needed to determine and minimize the public health impacts of these changes. A growing number of states have loosened restrictions on cannabis, including those on sales and use, by passing medical marijuana laws or by making cannabis legal for adult recreational use, and in some cases states have done both.

Recognizing this widening research gap, NIDA solicited input from an Advisory Council Workgroup to identify cannabis policy research areas with the greatest urgency and potential for impact. The workgroup report can be found here:

https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/nacda_cannabis_policy_research_workgroup_report_feb_2018.pdf. Examples of research areas highlighted in the report that are of interest to NIDA are included below.

Research Objectives

Areas of programmatic interest to NIDA include:

- Develop standards for measuring cannabis dose, intoxication, and impairment.
- Enhance existing epidemiology research to study trends for cannabis use and CUD; including new products, patterns of use, and reasons for use in different populations.
- Characterize the composition/potency of cannabis, methods of administration, cannabis extracts/concentrates, and cannabis of varying constituents (e.g. cannabinoid or terpene content), as well as how those factors impact physical and mental health.
- Determine the physical and mental health antecedents of use, as well as outcomes of use.
- Explore the impact of polysubstance use on health outcomes, including interactions (substitution/complementation) with alcohol, tobacco, and prescription and nonprescription opioids;
- Examine reasons for initiation and continued use of marijuana for therapeutic purposes.
- Investigate the effects of different patterns of cannabis use on brain development, educational attainment, and transition to work and adult roles.
- Identify the effects of maternal cannabis consumption during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Develop effective roadside tests for cannabis impairment that can be practically deployed by law enforcement.
- Determine the prevalence of cannabis-involved vehicular crashes and other types of injury or property damage.
- Investigate how cannabis industry practices, including research on marketing, taxes, and prices, impact use and health outcomes (e.g. how different price points impact consumption patterns across different levels of use).
- Explore the effects of alternative business models for retail distribution of cannabis that would minimize harm to the public.

- Research alternative regulatory models for public health and public safety, including research on alternative legalization models in non-US countries (e.g. Canada, Uruguay).

Instructions for submitting applications:

- Insert "DAT-" (four characters) in the beginning of the Project Title of the application. [Note: NIH limits the Project Title to 200 characters (including spaces and punctuation)].
- Insert the DAT Code (e.g., DAT18-01) before the first sentence of the abstract. (This is for internal NIDA tracking purposes only).

Relevant Funding Opportunities

[PA-18-484](#), NIH Research Project Grant (Parent R01, no CT allowed)

[PA-18-345](#), NIH Research Project Grant (Parent CT R01, CT only allowed)

[PA-18-489](#), NIH Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Program (Parent R21, no CT allowed)

[PA-18-344](#), NIH Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Program (Parent CT R21, CT only allowed)

[PA-18-488](#), NIH Small Research Grant Program (Parent R03, no CT allowed)

[PA-18-591](#), Administrative Supplements to Existing NIH Grants and Cooperative Agreements (Parent Admin Supp Clinical Trial Optional)

Scientific/Research (Program) Contacts

[Heather Kimmel, PhD](#)

[Epidemiology Research Branch, \(ERB\)](#)

(301) 443-6504

Heather.Kimmel@nih.gov

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Cannabis Policy
- Tobacco

[Marsha Lopez, PhD, MHS](#)

[Epidemiology Research Branch, \(ERB\)](#)

(301) 443-6504

Marsha.Lopez@nih.gov

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Cannabis
- Policy
- Epidemiology

[Steve Gust, PhD](#)

[International Program, \(IP\)](#)

(301) 402-1118

Steve.Gust@nih.gov

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Cannabis Policy
- International