



CHAYA

Cannabis, Health, &
Young Adolescents



SCIENCE BRIEF

NOVEMBER 2022



About

Developmental Trajectories of Illicit Drug Use, Prescription Drug Misuse and Cannabis Practices Among Young Adult Cannabis Users in Los Angeles

Drug Use Trajectory

What is drug use trajectory research?

Drug use trajectory research explores longitudinal trends of drug use by capturing changes in the intensity or likelihood of use over time and by examining the impact of different factors on these changing patterns.

Background

What do we already know about drug use?

Young adults in the United States have the highest prevalence of **illicit drug use** and **prescription drug misuse** compared to adolescents and older adults. Additionally, some studies have found an overlap between intensity of **cannabis use** and frequency of **drug use**.

Purpose

What did your current research look at?

The current study investigated the relationships between longitudinal trends (or trajectories) of **illicit drug use & prescription drug misuse** and **cannabis practices** among young adult cannabis users.

Methods

How did you conduct the current research?

Young adult cannabis users completed annual surveys across 4 consecutive years where they were asked about their past 90-day use of **illicit & prescription drugs** and **cannabis practices** at each wave.

Sample



n = 301

Cannabis Users

Young adults between the ages of 18-26 years were recruited in Los Angeles, CA.

Data collected



Wave 1: 2014 - 2015

Wave 2: 2015 - 2016

Wave 3: 2016- 2017

Wave 4: 2017- 2018

Measures



Cannabis Practices

- Medical Cannabis Patient Status
- Past 90-Day Use of Cannabis
- Cannabis Forms Used
 - Concentrates
 - Edibles
- Self-Reported Medical Cannabis Use
- Problematic Cannabis Use



Illicit Drug Use

- Past 90-Day Use of Illicit drugs



Prescription (Rx) Misuse

- Past 90-Day Misuse of Rx drugs



Findings

[Trajectories + Cannabis Practices]

Trajectory Trends

What longitudinal trends were revealed for illicit & prescription drug use/misuse trajectories?

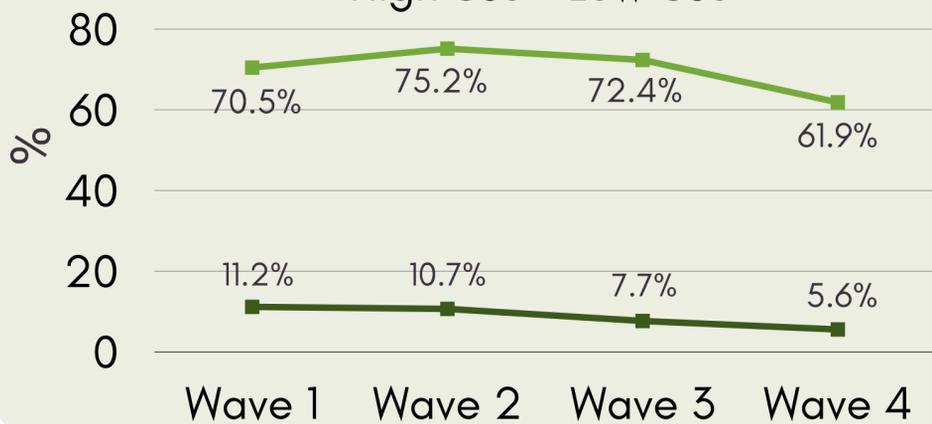
Among young adult cannabis users, there were two trajectory groups (**high- & low- use**) found for both *illicit drugs* and *prescription drugs*.



ILLCIT DRUG USE

Past 90 Day Use

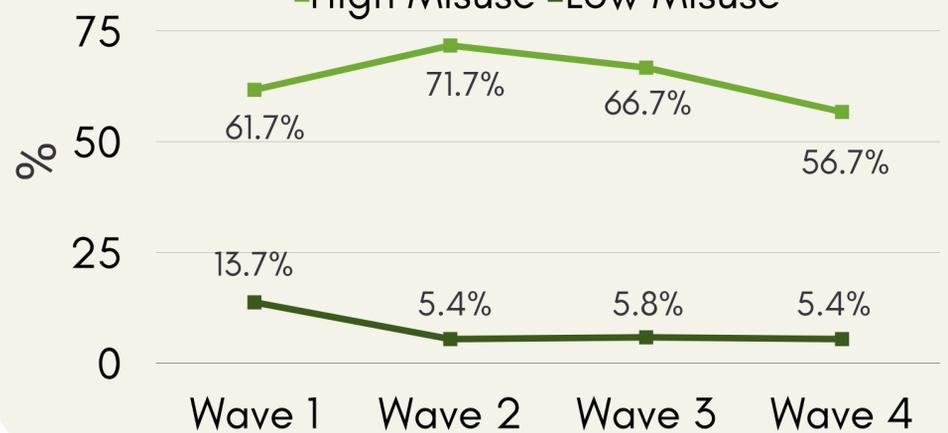
■ High Use ■ Low Use



RX DRUG MISUSE

Past 90 Day Use

■ High Misuse ■ Low Misuse



Illicit Drug Use

What are the relationships between illicit drug use trajectories & cannabis practices?

High illicit drug use trajectory was positively associated with *concentrates & edibles use*. However, those who endorsed *self-reported medical cannabis use* were less likely to be in a **high illicit drug use** trajectory.

Prescription (Rx) Misuse

What are the relationships between prescription misuse trajectories & cannabis practices?

High prescription drug misuse trajectory was also positively associated with *concentrates & edibles use* and *greater days of cannabis use*.

Cannabis practices associated with Illicit Drug Use



Concentrates & Edibles



Self-Reported Non-Medical MJ Use

Cannabis practices associated with Rx Drug Misuse



Concentrates & Edibles



Days of MJ Use

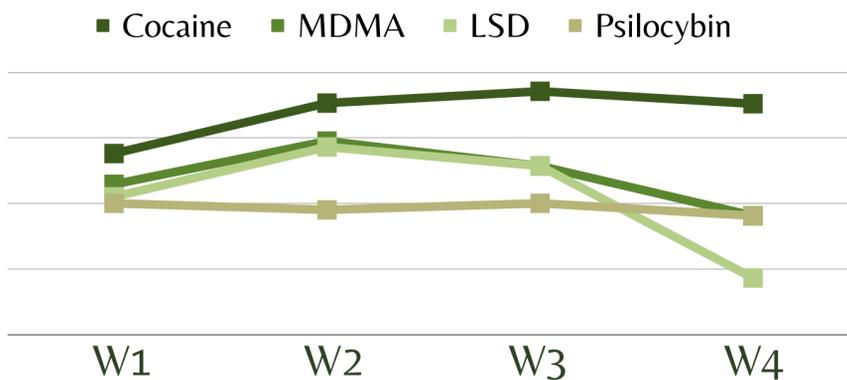


Findings

[Drug Use Trajectories]

Illicit Drug Use

What were some of the most common illicit drugs reportedly used?

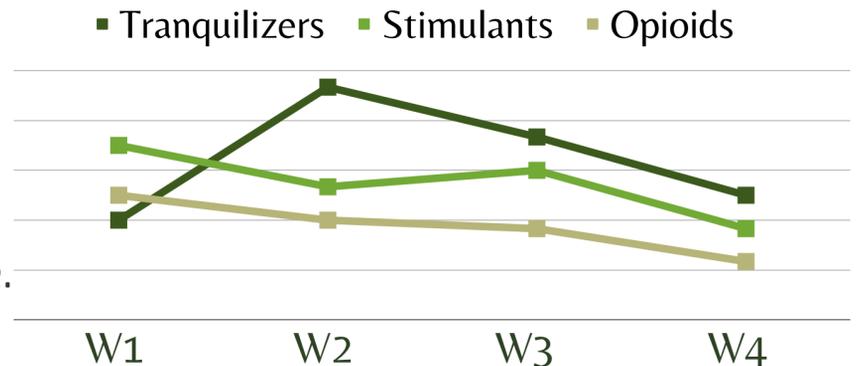


The **high illicit drug use trajectory** group were primarily driven by *cocaine, MDMA, LSD, & psilocybin* use.

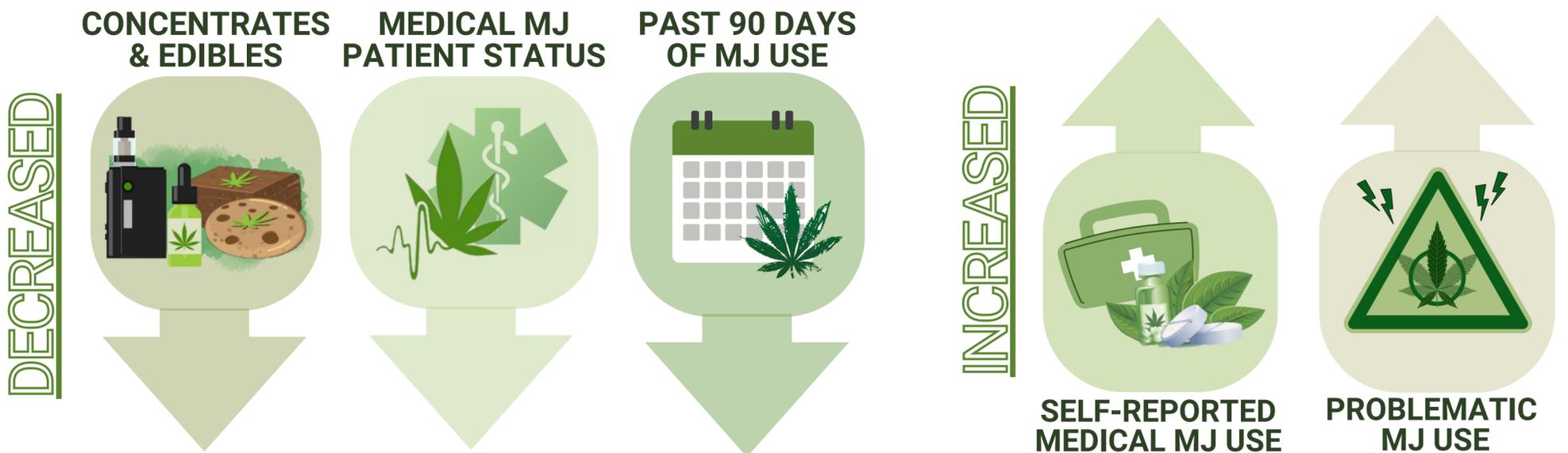
Prescription Misuse

What were some of the most common prescription (Rx) drugs reportedly misused?

The **high prescription drug misuse trajectory** was primarily driven by prescription *tranquillizer, stimulant, and opioid* misuse.



[Cannabis Practices]



Cannabis Trends

What longitudinal trends were observed for cannabis practices?

Edibles use, days of cannabis use and proportion of medical cannabis patients declined by Wave 4. *Self-reported medical cannabis use* and problematic cannabis use increased by Wave 4.



Conclusion

Key Points

- Among young adult cannabis users, two trajectory groups (**high & low**) were identified for both **illicit drug use** and **prescription drug misuse**.
- **High-use trajectories** trends were primarily driven by *cocaine* (**illicit**) and *tranquilizer misuse* (**prescription**) which declined by Wave 4.
- Young adult cannabis users in the **high-use trajectory** group for **illicit drug use** were less likely to *self-report medical cannabis use* compared to those within **low-use trajectory** group.
- Individuals in the **high-misuse trajectory** group for **prescription drug misuse** reported *greater days of cannabis use*, compared to individuals in the **low-misuse trajectory** group.
- Cannabis users in **high-use trajectory** groups for **both types of substances** were more likely to use *alternative cannabis forms* (i.e., concentrates & edibles) compared to individuals within the **low-use trajectory groups**.
- Overall, both **high-** and **low-use trajectories** for both **illicit drug use** and **prescription drug misuse** revealed declining trends of use by Wave 4
- Finally, i) *concentrates and edible use*, ii) *cannabis days of use*, and iii) prevalence of *medical cannabis status* decreased by Wave 4, while *self-reported medical cannabis use* (not statistically significant) and *problematic cannabis use* increased.

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