

Regarding Cannabis Use and Overactive Bladder



To the Editor:

I am writing to address a significant methodological concern in the recently published article by Zhu et al.¹

The study's classification of cannabis exposure appears to be overly simplistic and potentially misleading. According to the paper, marijuana use was assessed based on the following two questions. 1. "Have you ever, even once, used marijuana or hashish?" and 2. "Have you ever smoked marijuana or hashish at least once a month for more than one year?". Participants who answered "yes" to both questions were considered regular users. The remaining participants, including those who answered "no" to the second question and those who had never used marijuana, were classified as nonregular users. Additionally, the frequency of marijuana use was determined by the question: "During the time that you smoked marijuana or hashish, how often would you usually use it?".¹

However, the question "Have you ever smoked marijuana or hashish at least once a month for more than one year?" only inquires about cannabis consumption of at least once a month in any one year. This could apply equally to a regular cannabis user from 30 years ago who used cannabis only for that one year, or to a regular cannabis user who has used cannabis continuously for the past 5 years. This classification does not take into account the cumulative effect of cannabis use or the period of cannabis usage, which are critical factors in understanding the relationship between marijuana use

and health outcomes such as overactive bladder. Therefore, the authors should consider additional variables available in NHANES, such as "DUQ215Q—Time since last used marijuana regularly" and "DUQ215U—Time since used marijuana regularly/unit."²

Moreover, the assessment of the frequency of cannabis use using the question "During the time that you smoked marijuana or hashish, how often would you usually use it?" should be interpreted alongside another variable in the NHANES dataset: "DUQ217—How often would you use marijuana?".² This distinction is important as it differentiates between someone who might use one joint every day and another who uses 3-5 joints only once a month.

A more accurate classification would better estimate joint use per year or monthly cannabis use over the past 5, 10, or 15 years using the available NHANES variables such as "Age started regularly using marijuana," "Time since last used marijuana regularly," "Time since used marijuana regularly/unit," "How often would you use marijuana?" and "How many joints or pipes smoked in a day?".²

By not incorporating these variables, the study potentially overlooks the nuanced patterns of cannabis use, leading to a misclassification of exposure. This oversight could affect the study's conclusions about the relationship between marijuana use and overactive bladder.

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