

Clinical Sciences - Poster Abstracts / Sciences cliniques - Abrégés affiches

Abstract #166

Feasibility of Evaluating Standard THC Units (STU) Across Product Types Among People Living with HIV in Ontario, Canada

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Aims: Canada's legalization of recreational cannabis has resulted in greater product diversification. We need accurate measures of quantity to evaluate risks and benefits, and to provide public health guidance on safer levels of use. We investigated the use of survey data to determine STU across product types.

Methods: We recruited 292 participants of a multi-site clinical HIV cohort, the Ontario HIV Treatment Network Cohort Study, who reported cannabis use in the past year to complete an extensive cannabis questionnaire (August 2022-December 2023). We inquired about use of smoked flower, vaped flower, edibles, beverages, capsules, topicals, vape cartridges, concentrates/extracts, hashish, oil drops, and tinctures. Stratified by product type, we calculated STU for each participant's self-reported use by multiplying amount used by THC content and dividing by 5 mg. We removed outliers using pre-specified cutoff values.

Results: With a mean age of 50 years, most participants were men (84%), White (72%), and used cannabis in the past month (89%). The most consumed products in the past year were smoked flower (68%), edibles (55%), vaped flower (25%), beverages (19%), vaped cartridges (18%), and hashish (17%). Only a portion of participants who indicated use provided information on amount used and THC content to calculate STU, going from 35% for concentrates/extracts to 73% for edibles. STUs were highest for vaped flower (M=276, SD=98), followed by smoked flower reported in grams (M=124, SD=146), hashish (M=86, SD 282), and smoked flower reported in joints (M=60, SD=86). Mean STU ranged broadly across product types and SDs for some products were high.

Conclusions: People with HIV reported a broad range of use across product types. Calculation of STU per product type was feasible using THC content ranges and amounts used in a jurisdiction under federal legalization. Future research should further refine the questionnaire and algorithm to best determine STU.