



## Cannabis Use Disorder: Focus on Treatment as Marijuana Use Rises

BY CELIA VIMONT | JUNE 3, 2015

With marijuana use on the rise in the United States, and an increase in potency of the drug, **addiction specialists are seeing a rise in the rates of daily/heavy use of marijuana among teens**, according to an expert from Columbia University Medical School.

Frances Levin, MD, Kennedy Leavy Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University Medical Center, says **while teens represent about 30 percent of treatment admissions for cannabis use disorder, the majority of patients treated for the disorder are 18 and older**. Dr. Levin spoke about cannabis use disorder at the recent annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association.

There are a number of criteria that doctors use to determine if a person has crossed over from regular marijuana use to cannabis use disorder, Dr. Levin explains. "It's not simply a matter of how much marijuana a person uses, it's how it impacts their functioning," she says. Other criteria include continuing to use marijuana despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of cannabis, developing tolerance for the drug and craving or a strong desire or urge to use cannabis.

The percentage of treatment programs in which marijuana is identified as the primary substance of abuse is rising, Dr. Levin says. "Alcohol is still the number one problem, **but the percentage of admissions primarily related to marijuana is increasing**," she notes.

A report released last year by the [U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime](#) concluded marijuana use is increasing in the United States as Americans change their attitude about the drug's risks. The report found the number of Americans ages 12 or older who used marijuana at least once in the previous year increased to 12.1 percent in 2012, from 10.3 percent in 2008. More Americans are seeking help for marijuana-related disorders.

Legalization of recreational marijuana in several states may be increasing marijuana-related incidents among minors, even though use of the drug is legal only for those over 21. **Colorado middle schools reported a 24 percent increase in drug-related incidents in 2014**. School officials say **while marijuana use has long been a problem, more students are trying it now that it is more easily available and socially accepted**.

A substantial percentage of people seeking treatment for cannabis use disorder have a co-occurring disorder such as **depression, anxiety or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder**, Dr. Levin says. “Initially they may feel marijuana helps them cope with their psychiatric symptoms, but by the time they seek treatment, **marijuana may be making the symptoms worse.**” ■

Entire article here: <http://goo.gl/jtLpM3>

## Illinois Can't Afford Pro-Pot Policies



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