



Cannabis Vaping: an online survey characterising patterns of use, reasons for use and the effects of vaping

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Introduction

Cannabis vaping is an emerging method of cannabis use within the UK, but it is poorly characterised and understood.

The self reported 'high' and onset of effects from vaped cannabis is comparable to smoked cannabis (e.g. Hazekamp et al, 2013).

We recently reported on the behaviours and experiences of cannabis vapers from online written posts in drug-related public internet forums (Soar et al, 2017).

The current study aimed to extend our previous knowledge of cannabis vaping in a larger cohort of cannabis vapers; to establish patterns of use, reasons for vaping, perceived benefits and effects of vaping relative to smoking cannabis.

Method

An online Qualtrics survey taking 15-20 mins disseminated to target current adult cannabis vapers via relevant online forums, communities and social media

Survey consisted of questions addressing:

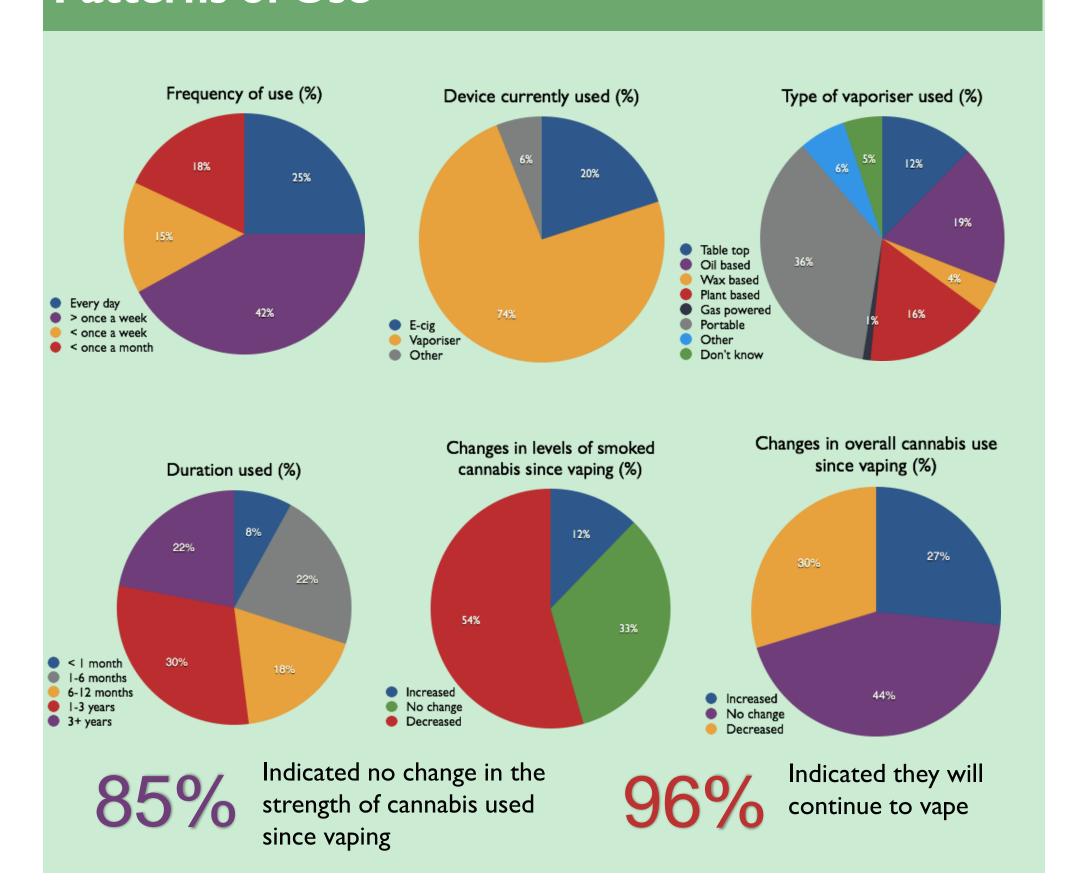
- Demographics information
- Cannabis dependence (CUDIT-R; Adamson et al, 2010)
- Vaping usage characteristics
- Reasons for vaping cannabis
- Beliefs around cannabis vaping
- Effects of vaping cannabis

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Participants

89 cannabis vapers; of which 27% (n=24) were exclusive vapers. Average age of 29 years, 72% male, 84% white, 56% single, 48% employed and 26% were students. 33% from the UK, 9% Europe, 48% USA.

Patterns of Use



Results Table 1:Reasons endorsed for starting to and continuing to Vape (% reported) annabis has a reduced odour Starting Continuing It is healthier Continuing Fairly Important Extremely / most important Table 2: Effects of cannabis vaping (% reported) Helped me to stop smoking cannabis A good replacement to smoking cannabis Improvements in breathing since vaping cannabis Produces a definite 'hit' A better taste than smoking cannabis Produces a quicker 'hit' than smoking cannabis As satisfying as smoking cannabis Irritates airways more than smoking Crave cannabis vaping like smoking cannabis Looks and feels better Better experience/high than smoking cannabis Vaping is extremely satisfying Reduced smell relative to smoking it Prefer to vape than smoke in public places Allows more discreet use of cannabis, than smoking Helped to cut down tobacco smoking Enjoying others reactions to vaping cannabis Helped to cut down the amount of cannabis consumed Allows more cannabis use The 'hit' from vaping compares well smoking cannabis Reduced urge to smoke since vaping Safer than smoking cannabis Allows use of cannabis where wouldn't ordinarily have smoked cannabis Strongly disagree Disagree Neither disagree or agree Strongly Agree Table 3: Effects of cannabis vaping (% reported) Mouth irritation Throat irritation Aching jaws Feeling sick Vomiting Flatulence/Bloating Stomach ache Heartburn Diarrhoea Hiccups Feeling high Feeling dizzy Headache Sweatiness Cold hands/feet **Palpitations**

Conclusions

Cannabis vapers report minimal side effects from vaping, relative to the benefits endorsed for vaping compared to smoking cannabis. These benefits have both contributed and continue to reinforce vaping as an alternative method for consuming cannabis. Whilst the majority don't increase their overall cannabis usage (and with some a reduction is seen), levels of smoking cannabis decreased and a large number intend to continue vaping cannabis, suggesting sustainable changes in their cannabis use.

All the time

References

- Hazekamp A, Ruhaak R,, Zuurman L, Gerven JV, Verpoorte R (2013) Evaluation of Vaporizing Device (Volcano®) for the Pulmonary Administration of Tetrahydrocannabinol. *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences*, 95(6): 1308-1317
- Soar K, Greenhill R, Dawkins L, Turner JJD (2017) Cannabis Vaping: experiences, advantages and practicalities as voiced in internet forums. SSA Annual Conference Nov 2017 https://www.addiction-ssa.org/symposium/poster/cannabis-vaping-experiences-advantages-and-practicalities-as-voiced-in-inte