

Co-use of Alcohol & Cannabis: Its Influence on Cannabis Related Adverse Outcomes & Driving Behavior

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Studies suggest that the co-use of alcohol and cannabis leads to a higher possibility of adverse outcomes and increased engagement in risky behaviors such as impaired driving compared to using either substance alone. However, little is known about alcohol's influence on cannabis-related adverse outcomes and driving behavior. In this study, we sought to investigate if the co-use of alcohol and cannabis led to a higher number of cannabis-related outcomes and higher instances of driving while high. We defined the co-use of cannabis and alcohol by collecting the average number of drinks that participants drank and the average number of grams that participants smoked each day over the course of the study. Participants between the ages of 18-50 ($M=22$, $SD=5.25$) who smoked more than 3x per week for the past month were recruited from the community using internet and print advertisements. For 14 days using ecological momentary assessments (EMA), participants ($N=52$) completed surveys that assessed their use of alcohol and cannabis, a number of adverse outcomes, and driving behavior. Linear regressions illustrated that there were not statistically significant interactions between the co-use of alcohol and cannabis in predicting the overall number of cannabis-related adverse outcomes ($b=.23$, $SE=.65$, $p=.72$) or driving while high ($b=.35$, $SE=.45$, $p=.44$). We observed an incidental finding, such that the average number of grams that participants smoked per day was not associated with predicting cannabis-related adverse outcomes overall ($b=2.03$, $SE=1.35$, $p=.14$), but it did significantly predict higher instances of driving while high ($b=2.00$, $SE=.93$, $p<0.05$). Results suggest that the co-use of alcohol and cannabis does not impact cannabis-related adverse outcomes, nor does it predict increases in instances of driving while high. Nonetheless, the study expands our knowledge regarding co-use. Future research should compare alcohol and cannabis to understand their unique outcomes.