

Professor Dame Carol Black Inquiry Cannabis Violence

Summary of Effects

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Some very old papers published around the turn of the century record violence. That was when cannabis had around **1-2% THC** and was **hemp**.

‘THC can **induce a transient acute psychotic reaction** in psychiatrically well individuals’. (Morrison, Murray et al 2009). Cannabis causes **paranoia** (Freeman 2014). Excess dopamine is released.

Genetic vulnerability may/not be required for psychosis to progress to schizophrenia. (Di Forti (2012) Skunk-induced schizophrenia (THC about 20%) costs this country about £2b/year to treat (R Murray).

Almost half of **535 Danish patients** with **cannabis-induced psychosis** went on to develop a schizophrenic illness, a third developed **paranoid schizophrenia**. (Arendt 2005).

Suicides were investigated in Sweden in 1995. Of those who jumped from a great height, 11% were under the influence of cannabis (low THC content). This was much higher than suicides from users of heroin, amphetamines or alcohol, none of whom jumped, and none, unlike the cannabis users, had committed murder. A cannabis smoker is nearly 20 times more likely to take his own life by jumping than a non-smoker. (Fugelstadt 1995)

Of **73 murderers** in NY prison, 1984 were under cannabis influence at the time, **18 admitted** cannabis was linked to the murder. (Spunt 1994)

Comparisons with other drugs:

1. Alcohol dependent individuals were almost **twice**, **marijuana**-dependents almost **4 times**, and those suffering from **schizophrenia** spectrum disorder, **two and a half** times more likely than controls to be violent. **Greater frequency** of marijuana use was found to be associated with greater likelihood to commit **weapons offences**. (Arsenault 2001). **THC content only around 4-6%** at this time.

2. School surveys in 2005/6 revealed that in violent activities, carrying guns, injuring with weapons, marijuana users outnumbered users of cocaine and crystal meth. by about 20%. Marijuana users were twice as likely to disobey school rules. Violent threats to other pupils - 27% marijuana users, 7.8% cocaine and 6.2% crystal meth. This association was not found with any other drug except alcohol. (P.R.I.D.E. 2005/6). **THC content low (4-6%)**. Crystal meth. is associated with violence and murder.

Adolescent marijuana use, particularly consistent use throughout adolescence, is associated with perpetration or both perpetration of and victimization by **intimate partner violence** in early adulthood. **There was a dose-response relationship with higher cannabis use and an increasing number of violent offences (Reingle 2012 Fleur 2014)**.

Withdrawal aggression frequent (Kouri 1999,2002). Marijuana Withdrawal Added to DSM 5

Any **current** cannabis users were nearly **4 times more likely** than non-users to present at least once for violent trauma (Kylie 2015). **Continued use of cannabis** over the life-time of the study was **the strongest predictor of violent convictions**. Cannabis use is associated with a **7-fold greater odds** for subsequent commission of **violent crimes**. This is similar to the increased risk of lung cancer from smoking cigarettes. (Schoeler 2016). **Skunk is now only type** available in London (Murray).

Latest findings: Daily cannabis use was associated with increased odds of **psychotic disorder** compared with **never users** increasing to nearly **five-times** for daily use of **high-potency** types of cannabis (Di Forti 2019)

“Cannabis is a huge issue for psychiatric services at this moment. I work in a first-contact schizophrenia service and it might as well be a **Cannabis Dependency Unit**”. Professor Peter Jones Cambridge University 2005.

49 References

