



New Study Finds Marijuana Abuse Linked to Suicide Attempts by Iraq/Afghanistan-Era Veterans

Study shows strong, statistically significant link between marijuana use disorder and suicide attempts, even after controlling for PTSD, depression, alcohol abuse, and other drug addictions

Contact: Anisha Gianchandani

anisha@learnaboutsam.org

+1 (703) 828-8182

[Alexandria, VA] - A recent [study published by the Journal of Psychiatric Research](#) found that marijuana-dependent Iraq/Afghanistan-era veterans have an increased risk of suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide. More than 3,000 veterans were sampled, and the study design also controlled for extraneous factors including PTSD, depression, alcohol dependence, and other drug disorders.

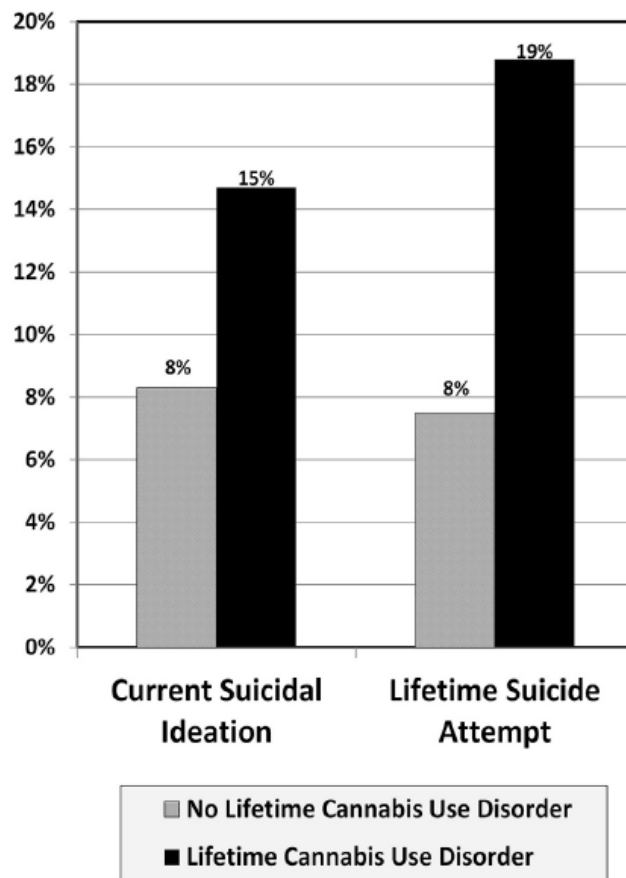


Fig. 1. Bivariate association between lifetime cannabis use disorder and current suicidal ideation and lifetime history of suicide Attempts.

This study expands on the [recent National Academies of Sciences \(NAS\) report](#), which found only limited evidence that marijuana or cannabinoids could be effective in treating symptoms of PTSD. In fact, the NAS report revealed a stronger association between marijuana use and social anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, and schizophrenia.

A 2015 [Yale University study](#) also showed a connection between marijuana use and PTSD symptoms and alcohol use.

Veterans are a particularly vulnerable population with respect to mental health issues, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recently reported that [approximately 20 veterans die by suicide each day in the United States](#). While some veterans who suffer from PTSD have turned to medical marijuana to ease their symptoms, the science suggests that this "treatment" could actually make their condition worse.

"It is distressing to realize that many veterans suffering from PTSD have been sold the false promise that marijuana use can ease their symptoms, when in fact the science shows it's just the opposite," said SAM President Dr. Kevin A. Sabet. "We all want veterans to have a healthy and successful readjustment to civilian life, and it's clear that marijuana has no place in that. This study may be the tip of the iceberg showing the alarming links between marijuana use and suicide."

For more information about marijuana use and its effects, see <http://www.learnaboutsam.org>.

###

About SAM

Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) is a nonpartisan, non-profit alliance of physicians, policy makers, prevention workers, treatment and recovery professionals, scientists, and other concerned citizens opposed to marijuana legalization who want health and scientific evidence to guide marijuana policies. SAM has affiliates in more than 30 states.

www.learnaboutsam.org

