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## MENTAL HEALTH AND CANNABIS USE

**Drug Free Australia has taken the position that research evidence now demonstrates a likely link between heavy high-potency marijuana use and certain mass murders.**

Research in the past has brought this to the world's attention e.g. The Cannabis-Psychosis Link by Marie-Josée Lynch, MD, Rachel A. Rabin, MSc, and Tony P. George, MD, FRCPC | 12 January 2012. This paper is summarised as "Fewer neurological soft signs among first episode psychosis patients with heavy cannabis use." *Schizophrenia Research* 107 (2009) 158-164.

Therefore, Drug Free Australia is seeking to bring urgent attention to Australian and New Zealand Governments, whether Federal or State, regarding extremely important research relating to **Mental Health and cannabis use**. It appears that Australian public policies have moved from concern for the health and wellbeing of society - by improving and promoting good health - to pushing unnecessary drug use for profiteers while charging the tab to society-at-large.

DFA believes that it is time for governments worldwide to promote research and media publicity which avoids the cherry-picked faux studies used by those wanting to legalise cannabis. Rather, the focus should be on its serious harms to mental and physical health particularly related to early use.

*London* — Smoking high-potency marijuana every day could increase the chances of developing psychosis by nearly five times, according to the biggest-ever study to examine the impact of pot on psychotic disorder rates. The scientists estimated that people who smoked marijuana daily were three times more likely to be diagnosed with psychosis compared with people who never used the drug. For those who used high-potency marijuana daily, the risk jumped to nearly five times. The paper was published online by the journal Lancet. It was paid for by funders including Britain's Medical Research Council,

the Sao Paulo Research Foundation and the Wellcome Trust.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/marijuana-psychosis-smoking-strong-pot-daily-increases-risk-of-psychosis-study-finds/>

*“Our main findings show that among the measures of cannabis use tested, the strongest independent predictors of whether any given individual would have a psychotic disorder or not were daily use of cannabis and use of high-potency cannabis. The odds of psychotic disorder among daily cannabis users were 3·2 times higher than for never users, whereas the odds among users of high-potency cannabis were 1·6 times higher than for never users. Starting to use cannabis by 15 years of age modestly increased the odds for psychotic disorder but not independently of frequency of use or of the potency of the cannabis used. These measures of extent of exposure did not interact with each other, nor did they interact with the sites. This lack of interaction between degree of cannabis use (i.e., daily use of cannabis or use of high-potency cannabis) and site might reflect insufficient power in our study; however, it could also indicate that although the magnitude of the effect might vary depending on the degree of cannabis use, there is a consistent effect of daily use and use of high-potency cannabis on the ORs for psychotic disorders across all study sites.”*

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(19\)30048-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(19)30048-3/fulltext)

### **After Aurora, Questions About Mass Murder and Mental Illness**

*“When looking at the rates of violent crime overall — homicide, for instance — the best estimate is that 5% to 10% of murders are committed by people with mental illness. But a far larger proportion of mass homicides, including the brutal July 2011 attacks in Norway, the Tucson, Ariz., shooting that wounded Congresswoman Gabby Giffords and the Virginia Tech massacre in 2007, involve perpetrators with mental illness. The proportion far outstrips the rates of mental illness in the population.*

*So what leads one person to violence but not another? In some cases, it may be the stigma of mental illness that provokes it, by exacerbating existing symptoms of delusion, disconnection from reality, social withdrawal, and lack of emotion. A rare insight into the mind of a patient with schizophrenia comes from a former academic who wrote anonymously about her experience with social stigma from her disease (via writer David Dobbs at Wired). “N” writes: . . .*

<http://healthland.time.com/2012/07/31/mass-murder-and-mental-illness-the-interplay-of-stigma-culture-and-disease/>

### **Tell Your Children: The Truth About Marijuana, Mental Illness, and Violence**

*“Alex Berenson (Author) reveals the link between teenage marijuana use and mental illness, and a hidden epidemic of violence caused by the drug—facts the media have ignored as the United States rushes to legalize cannabis.*

*Psychosis brings violence, and cannabis-linked violence is spreading. In the four states that first legalized, murders have risen 25 percent since legalization, even more than the recent national increase. In Uruguay, which allowed retail sales in July 2017, murders have soared this year. Berenson’s reporting ranges from the London institute that is home to the scientists who helped prove the cannabis-psychosis link to the Colorado prison where a man now serves a thirty-year sentence after eating a THC-laced candy bar and killing his wife. He sticks to the facts, and they are devastating.*

*With the US already gripped by one drug epidemic, this book will make readers reconsider if marijuana use is worth the risk.”*

<https://drugfree.org.au/index.php/resources/recommended-books/240-tell-your-children>

### **The contribution of cannabis uses to variation in the incidence of psychotic disorder across Europe (EU-GEI): a multicentre case-control study**

*“In conclusion, our findings confirm previous evidence of the harmful effect on mental health of daily use of cannabis, especially of high-potency types. Importantly, they indicate for the first time how cannabis use affects the incidence of psychotic disorder. Therefore, it is of public health importance to acknowledge alongside the potential medicinal properties of some cannabis constituents the potential adverse effects that are associated with daily cannabis use, especially of high-potency varieties.”*

[https://www.thelancet.com/article/S2215-0366\(19\)30048-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/article/S2215-0366(19)30048-3/fulltext)

### **Cannabis and Psychosis: Recent Epidemiological Findings Continuing the “Causality Debate”**

*“The increase in the prevalence of psychosis reported in this issue by Livne et al., which parallels the liberalization of cannabis laws, offers potential opportunities to delineate the causal influence of cannabis on psychosis in a counterfactual or “potential outcomes” framework. It will be critical to follow the trend observed in the study in future waves of nationally representative surveys, to inform public health policy on the mental health impact of recreational cannabis consumption.”*

<https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ajp.2021.21111126>

## **Association of High-Potency Cannabis Use With Mental Health and Substance Use in Adolescence** British Journal of Psychiatry

*“Conclusions and Relevance: To our knowledge, this study provides the first general population evidence suggesting that the use of high-potency cannabis is associated with mental health and addiction. Limiting the availability of high-potency cannabis may be associated with a reduction in the number of individuals who develop cannabis use disorders, the prevention of cannabis use from escalating to a regular behavior, and a reduction in the risk of mental health disorders.”*

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2765973>

### **Literature reviews of studies on Marijuana and Violence**

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7084484/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32121373/>

<https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/17/5/1578>

<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/relationship-between-cannabis-and-violence-review>

[https://www.drugfree.org.au/images/pdf-files/library/Marijuana /A Review of Cases of Marijuana and Violence.pdf](https://www.drugfree.org.au/images/pdf-files/library/Marijuana/A%20Review%20of%20Cases%20of%20Marijuana%20and%20Violence.pdf)

### **Chronic Marijuana Use and Violence**

[https://d3sdr0llis3crb.cloudfront.net/images/pdf-files/library/Brain Mental Health/Chronic Marijuana Use and Violence\\_Linked.pdf](https://d3sdr0llis3crb.cloudfront.net/images/pdf-files/library/Brain%20Mental%20Health/Chronic%20Marijuana%20Use%20and%20Violence_Linked.pdf)

### **Association Between the Use of Cannabis and Physical Violence in Youth: A Meta-Analytical Investigation**

*“The results demonstrate a moderate association between cannabis use and physical violence, which remained significant regardless of study design and adjustment for confounding factors (i.e. socioeconomic factors, other substance use). Cannabis use in this population is a risk factor for violence.”*

<https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.ajp.2020.19101008>

### **Violence and Cannabis Use: A Focused Review of a Forgotten Aspect in the Era of Liberalizing Cannabis**

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2020.567887/full>

## David G. Evans, Esq letter to Attorney General Garland, 16 March 2022

In regard to the community having grave concerns regarding Marijuana and Violence David comments that there are many factors that increase violence and gun deaths, but marijuana is one of the most significant factors in crime and violence.

*For example, “there are 65 reports of marijuana-involved mass violence – representing 1000s of deaths and 1000s of injuries. We have no doubt there are many more. Each incident has an informational link to the relevant reports of how marijuana is involved with the perpetrator’s behavior. (Exhibit 5). The perpetrators of mass killings are often marijuana users or used marijuana heavily in adolescence. The Secret Service has reported on this marijuana connection. (Exhibit 6).”*

[https://d3sdr0llis3crb.cloudfront.net/images/pdf-files/library/Brain\\_Mental\\_Health/Mental\\_Health\\_Marijuana\\_NOTE\\_EXHIBITS\\_5\\_MARCH.16.2022.pdf](https://d3sdr0llis3crb.cloudfront.net/images/pdf-files/library/Brain_Mental_Health/Mental_Health_Marijuana_NOTE_EXHIBITS_5_MARCH.16.2022.pdf)

## Blame Legalised Marijuana for Increased Mass Shootings

<https://cloudflarepoc.newsmax.com/ronaldkessler/booker-harris-sanders-thc/2022/06/01/id/1072447/>

## TEXAS Uvalde killer and his marijuana use

[https://d3sdr0llis3crb.cloudfront.net/images/pdf-files/library/Brain\\_Mental\\_Health/TEXAS\\_Uvalde\\_killer\\_and\\_his\\_marijuana\\_use.pdf](https://d3sdr0llis3crb.cloudfront.net/images/pdf-files/library/Brain_Mental_Health/TEXAS_Uvalde_killer_and_his_marijuana_use.pdf)

## Cannabis Use and Suicidal Behavior and Long-term Harms—Reply

*“The primary aim of our study was to examine associations of cannabis use disorder (CUD) with self-harm, suicide, and overall mortality risk in adolescents and young adults with mood disorders. In this population-based retrospective longitudinal cohort study of Medicaid-enrolled individuals aged 10 to 24 years with mood disorders, more than 10% also had diagnosed CUD. The presence of CUD was significantly associated with increased risk of nonfatal self-harm, all-cause mortality, death by unintentional overdose, and death by homicide.”*

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2778777>

Texas data - For 2020, 180 of the 251 child fatalities caused by abuse or neglect involved a parent or caregiver actively using a substance and/or under the influence of at least one substance that affected the ability to care for the child. While opioid use was identified in four child fatalities,

marijuana was the substance most identified as an active substance in child abuse and neglect- related fatalities and was identified as prior use in 107 of the cases.

The violence marijuana issue example in the U.S. needs to be included, the issue of marijuana and spousal abuse and child fatalities. This is not just an issue of dozens of mass murders it is happening in homes nationwide impacting massive numbers of innocent children and family members - see page 22

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About\\_DFPS/Reports\\_and\\_Presentations/PEI/documents/2021/2021-03-01\\_FY2020\\_Child\\_Fatality\\_and\\_Near\\_Fatality\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/Reports_and_Presentations/PEI/documents/2021/2021-03-01_FY2020_Child_Fatality_and_Near_Fatality_Annual_Report.pdf)

### **Association of Cannabis use with self-harm and mortality risks among youths with mood disorders**

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2775255>

### **Recreational marijuana legalisation and domestic violence**

<https://everybrainmatters.org/science/marijuana-violence/>

### **Current causes of death in children and adolescents in the United States**

*“Drug overdose and poisoning increased by 83.6% from 2019 to 2020 among children and adolescents, becoming the third leading cause of death in that age group. This change is largely explained by the 110.6% increase in unintentional poisonings from 2019 to 2020. The rates for other leading causes of death have remained relatively stable since the previous analysis, which suggests that changes in mortality trends among children and adolescents during the early Covid-19 pandemic were specific to firearm-related injuries and drug poisoning; Covid-19 itself resulted in 0.2 deaths per 100,000 children and adolescents in 2020.”*

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2201761>

### **Association of Cannabis Potency with Mental ill health and addiction: A systematic review: The Lancet Psychiatry. [View in Article](#)**

**Cannabis use and prospective long-term association with anxiety: a systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal studies: Usage du cannabis et association prospective à long term avec l'anxiété: une revue systématique et une méta-analyse d'études longitudinales. *Can J Psychiatry*. 2021; **66**: 126-138 [View in Article](#)**

**What is the prevalence and risk of cannabis use disorders among people who use cannabis? A systematic review and meta-analysis.** *Addict Behav.* 2020; **109**:106479 [View in Article](#)

**The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews.** *BMJ.* 2021; **372**: n71 [View in Article](#)

**High-potency cannabis and the risk of psychosis.** *Br J Psychiatry.* 2009; **195**: 488-491 [View in Article](#)

**Daily use, especially of high-potency cannabis, drives the earlier onset of psychosis in cannabis users.** *Schizophr Bull.* 2014; **40**: 1509-1517 [View in Article](#)

**Interaction between cannabis consumption and childhood abuse in psychotic disorders: preliminary findings on the role of different patterns of cannabis use.** *Early Interv Psychiatry.* 2018; **12**: 135-142 [View in Article](#)

**The contribution of cannabis use to variation in the incidence of psychotic disorder across Europe (EU-GEI): a multicentre case-control study.** *Lancet Psychiatry.* 2019; **6**: 427-436 [View in Article](#)

**Daily use of high-potency cannabis is associated with more positive symptoms in first-episode psychosis patients: the EU-GEI case-control study.** *Psychol Med.* 2020; **51**: 1-9 [View in Article](#)

**Effects of continuation, frequency, and type of cannabis use on relapse in the first 2 years after onset of psychosis: an observational study.** *Lancet Psychiatry.* 2016; **3**: 947-953 [View in Article](#)

**Examining links between cannabis potency and mental and physical health outcomes.** *Behav Res Ther.* 2019; **115**: 111-120 [View in Article](#)

**Risk factors for the onset of dependence and chronic psychosis due to cannabis use: survey of patients with cannabis-related psychiatric disorders.** *Neuropsychopharmacol Rep.* 2020; **40**: 332-341 [View in Article](#)

**Association of high-potency cannabis use with mental health and substance use in adolescence.** *JAMA Psychiatry.* 2020; **77**: 1044-1051 [View in Article](#)

**A within-person comparison of the subjective effects of higher vs. lower-potency cannabis.** *Drug Alcohol Depend.* 2020; **216**:108225 [View in Article](#)

**Characterising heterogeneity in the use of different cannabis products: latent class analysis with 55 000 people who use cannabis and associations with severity of cannabis dependence.** *Psychol Med.* 2020; **50**: 2364-2373 [View in Article](#)

**The effectiveness of inhaled Cannabis flower for the treatment of agitation/irritability, anxiety, and common stress.** *J Cannabis Res.* 2020; **2**: 47 [View in Article](#)

**Changes in cannabis potency and first-time admissions to drug treatment: a 16-year study in the Netherlands.** *Psychol Med.* 2018; **48**: 2346-2352 [View in Article](#)

**The International Cannabis Toolkit (iCannToolkit): a multidisciplinary expert consensus on minimum standards for measuring cannabis use.** *Addiction.* 2021; **117**: 1510-1517 [View in Article](#)

**How does cannabidiol (CBD) influence the acute effects of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in humans? A systematic review.** *Neurosci Biobehav Rev.* 2019; **107**: 696-712 [View in Article](#)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS THAT CAN HELP PREVENT THE AUSTRALIAN “LOST GENERATION DYING”**

All Australian Governments and community leaders needs to take this evidence regarding Mental Health very seriously. The issue of cannabis-caused violence needs to be addressed. For example, the Australian Government must consider organising several Mental Health teams working 24/7 to evaluate the mental health and wellbeing of those involved in animal cruelty, road rage, spousal abuse and child fatalities. These teams should have the authority to place these individuals into detox and rehabilitation centres for three to twelve months according to their progress. They will also need to be constantly reminded that they are very important to the Australian community’s future. Here in Queensland, we have **one centre available. .and a third that could be built.** They could be equipped at minimum cost and run with existing staff for this mental health program.

### **1. Queensland Government Regional Accommodation Centre**

<https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/industry/queenslands-quarantine-network/queensland-regional-accommodation-centre>

The Queensland Regional Accommodation Centre is Queensland’s first purpose-built accommodation centre located at Wellcamp, 15km from the centre of Toowoomba. It is an investment in keeping Queenslanders safe and supporting our economic recovery. The Centre forms part of [Queensland’s Whole-of-Government Pandemic Plan](#) and will play a critical role in the State’s

isolation and quarantine network. It allows us to enhance existing quarantine and isolation arrangements and provide purpose-built accommodation to safeguard Queenslanders against a **range of public health scenarios**. The project was announced by the Queensland Government on 26 August 2021, with delivery of accommodation centres in two stages, with the first stage of **500 beds**.

## **2. U. K. Drive to get offenders drug-free and cut crime**

New prison wings designed to get offenders clean will receive funding thanks to the government's 10-year strategy to tackle drug-fuelled crime. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/drive-to-get-offenders-drug-free-and-cut-crime>

- £120 million to crack down on addiction and tackle drug-fuelled crime
- abstinence-led drug wings to be rolled out in prisons
- community drug testing boosted and extra support for prison leavers to prevent relapse

*"A £120 million drive, announced today (22 July 2022), will see the rollout of specialised wings across England and Wales which will treat drug addiction, including through abstinence, and then keep prisoners substance-free.*

*This tough approach will follow them through the prison gate, with offenders kept under closer control in the community with more drug testing, treatment and extra support to kick their addictions and keep our streets safer.*

*Ground-breaking new 'problem-solving courts' will also direct drug and alcohol abusers to tackle their addiction head-on or face tough consequences – including time in jail where necessary.*

*Illegal drug use costs the taxpayer nearly £22 billion each year, including NHS, prison and police costs. Around half of all prisoners have a drug problem but those who get treatment are 19 percentage points less likely to reoffend.*

*Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab said: Drugs trap criminals in a destructive cycle of offending and prevents them from getting their lives back on track.*

*Our plan will get offenders into rehab earlier, get them off all drugs permanently and support prisoners once they're released into the community. That will drive down reoffending and make our streets safer."*

### **3. The Early intervention of the 'Tried & Tested' Drug Court Moves to Dubbo**

</index.php/resources/need-counselling/1506-tried-tested-drug-court-moves-to-dubbo>

*The Dubbo region will benefit from a \$31.5 million investment in drug rehabilitation and access to justice. Deputy Premier John Barilaro today announced the NSW Government will invest \$27.9 million over the coming four financial years to expand the NSW Drug Court to Dubbo, on top of the recent \$3.6 million upgrade to the city's courthouse. "The Drug Court is a tried and tested silver bullet to help address the abuse of highly addictive and dangerous illicit drugs that continue to cripple our community.*

### **4. Substance Misuse Briefing - Drug Courts 2020**

</index.php/resources/need-counselling/1259-substance-misuse-briefing-drug-courts-2020>

Enhancing the Criminal Court Response to Substance Misuse: An Evidence and Practice Briefing (Drug Court Effectiveness) Evidence suggests substance misuse courts are effective at reducing reoffending and drug and alcohol misuse. Practitioners identify key problem-solving features including judicial engagement, fast-tracked treatment, tailored support, and multi-agency collaboration. "Such a process can motivate and inspire individuals to do better than they thought they were capable of"

The article in the Sunday Courier Mail 5 June 2022 called "**Lost generation dying**" relates a mental health shortage with thousands in peril. The research outcome in this paper has led DFA to reach the conclusion that Mental Health is above politics, and it is in the **national interest to provide staff, resources, support from all Government Departments, community, and media.**

We greatly appreciate your time in responding to these extremely important matters in terms of community health, welfare and safety and would value your response early in the new Parliament. Should you require further information and/or a face-to-face meeting we would be very pleased to accommodate.

Kind Regards

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**Prevent. Don't Promote Drug Use**

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