

We're Manufacturing Addicts: Marijuana Use Doubles Among US Adults

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As more marijuana becomes available in the U.S. over the past decade, marijuana use has doubled. And rates of cannabis dependence syndrome are climbing as well. This biobehavioral disorder affects three out of every ten Americans who have used marijuana in the past year.

As we permit legalization and commercialization of marijuana in any form, we move into the business of **manufacturing new addicts**. Marijuana addiction now afflicts 6.8 million Americans. While addiction affects all socioeconomic and racial groups, notable increases in the disorder has occurred markedly among groups who are ages 45 to 64 and individuals who are black or Hispanic, with the lowest incomes, or living in the South.

In addition to more addiction, there have been notable increases in problems such cannabis-related emergency room visits and fatal vehicle crashes.

The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) concludes, in their [October 21, 2015 report](#), *“The prevalence of marijuana use more than doubled between 2001-2002 and 2012-2013, and there was a large increase in marijuana use disorders during that time. While not all marijuana users experience problems, nearly 3 of 10 marijuana users manifested a marijuana use disorder in 2012-2013. Because the risk for marijuana use disorder did not increase among users, the increase in prevalence of marijuana use disorder is owing to an increase in prevalence of users in the US adult population. Given changing laws and attitudes toward marijuana, a balanced presentation of the likelihood of adverse consequences of marijuana use to policy makers, professionals, and the public is needed.”*

Typically, “when any substance is made more available, its use is expected to go up.” As a public health policy, a policy shift which increases use and harms associated with a drug is a **failed public health policy**.

Marijuana legalization and commercialization is a clear and shining example of failure to protect and promote the public health of the American people.

While many people continue to say that marijuana may have some medical benefit, the evidence after decades of research remains unclear. The **evidence of harm, however, is only getting clearing**. And the latest rise in use, addiction and death by car crash numbers add clarity to the picture of harms associated with widespread use of the drug.

JAMA author Hasin has said: *“This is important information for individuals to consider when making personal choices about using marijuana, and for the public to have when considering legalization.”*