Cannabis use disorder and suicide attempts in Iraq/Afghanistan-era veterans


Abstract

The objective of the present research was to examine the association between lifetime cannabis use disorder (CUD), current suicidal ideation, and lifetime history of suicide attempts in a large and diverse sample of Iraq/Afghanistan-era veterans (N = 3233) using a battery of well-validated instruments. As expected, CUD was associated with both current suicidal ideation (OR = 1.683, p = 0.008) and lifetime suicide attempts (OR = 2.306, p < 0.0001), even after accounting for the effects of sex, posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, alcohol use disorder, non-cannabis drug use disorder, history of childhood sexual abuse, and combat exposure. Thus, the findings from the present study suggest that CUD may be a unique predictor of suicide attempts among Iraq/Afghanistan-era veterans; however, a significant limitation of the present study was its cross-sectional design. Prospective research aimed at understanding the complex relationship between CUD, mental health problems, and suicidal behavior among veterans is clearly needed at the present time.

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