

Researchers consider marijuana use and mental health in emergency department patients

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Led by Catherine Marco, M.D., professor of emergency medicine and surgery, students at the Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine have helped to complete a study into the connection between marijuana use and mental health. Results of the analysis may spur future research into the understudied impacts of marijuana use.

The research study surveyed patients who visited the emergency department at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton between May and September 2019. Miami Valley Hospital is an inner-city, Level 1 Trauma Center with a typical annual patient volume of 95,000.

"The idea for this study came from our experience in the emergency department," Marco said. "We frequently see patients who use marijuana and also experience [mental health](#) conditions."

Medical student researchers interviewed emergency department patients to collect data on patients who use marijuana and also experience mental health conditions.

Among the findings, Marco and colleagues found that many emergency department patients use marijuana and experience mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts. Many started using marijuana at a young age (as young as 6 years old).

"Most patients started using marijuana at a young age and developed mental health symptoms after," Marco said. "We also found that patients who used marijuana frequently experienced more days of anxiety."

The results weren't surprising for Marco. She often sees patients in the [emergency department](#) who use marijuana and experience [mental health conditions](#).

"We hope that more research will be done on this topic, to inform the public about potential dangers of [marijuana use](#)," Marco said.

More information is needed about the safety of marijuana so that the public can be educated about its effects. This study is just one of many going on around the country that are considering the impacts.

Provided by Wright State University

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