

Cannabis use among two national samples of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tobacco smokers

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Abstract

Introduction and Aims: There is a concern that cannabis use is an important barrier to reducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smoking. We investigate the associations of cannabis use and tobacco smoking and quitting in two large national samples.

Design and Methods: The 2012–2013 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey was a national stratified random household survey conducted between April 2012 and February 2013, and included 2580 adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smokers. The Talking About The Smokes Project interviewed a national quota sample of 1301 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adult smokers between August 2013 and August 2014. Both surveys asked about tobacco smoking and quitting, cannabis use and socio-demographic factors.

Results: Both surveys estimated that cannabis use is common among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smokers (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey: 32%, Talking About The Smokes: 24%). Both surveys found a higher prevalence of cannabis use among smokers who were male, younger, unemployed or who more frequently consumed five or more alcoholic drinks in a day. However, the two surveys provided inconsistent evidence about whether cannabis use is associated with not quitting smoking tobacco.

Discussion and Conclusions: We did not find consistent evidence in this setting that cannabis use is an obstacle to quitting tobacco smoking. Nevertheless, we would still recommend that clinicians counselling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tobacco smokers about quitting talk about cannabis use because its use is common and almost all mix it with tobacco.

Recommended Citation

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