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Cannabis and Driving

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Abstract

As more states in the U.S legalize recreational and medicinal cannabis, rates of driving under the influence of this drug are increasing significantly. Aspects of this emerging public health issue potentially pit science against public policy. The authors believe that the legal cart is currently significantly ahead of the scientific horse. Issues such as detection procedures for cannabis-impaired drivers, and use of blood THC levels to gauge impairment, should rely heavily on current scientific knowledge. However, there are many, often unacknowledged research gaps in these and related areas, that need to be addressed in order provide a more coherent basis for public policies. This review focuses especially on those areas. In this article we review in a focused manner, current information linking cannabis to motor vehicle accidents and examine patterns of cannabis-impairment of driving related behaviors, their time courses, relationship to cannabis dose and THC blood levels, and compare cannabis and alcohol-impaired driving patterns directly. This review also delves into questions of alcohol-cannabis combinations and addresses the basis for of *per-se* limits in cannabis driving convictions. Finally, we distinguish between areas where research has provided clear answers to the above questions, areas that remain unclear, and make recommendations to fill gaps in current knowledge.

Keywords: THC; cannabinoids; cannabis use; driving impairment; motor vehicle driving; public health; roadside testing.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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