

ABSTRACT

Background: Cannabis drugs are the most used illicit drug in the Czech Republic. About 1,78 million people use cannabis, most of them are young people aged 15-34 years (Mravčík et al., 2020). Use in the young age, regular and intensive use of large amounts of cannabis is associated with the negative impact on health and life of users. Previous studies have described the harm reduction strategies, less is known about relative occurrence of the harm reduction strategies, especially in the Czech environment.

Aims: The aim of the study was to investigate what kind of harm reduction strategies are used by cannabis users.

Methods: The research was conducted as a quantitative study. This mapping study was aimed to describe the behaviour of cannabis users in relation to use of the harm reduction strategies, and to explore the relative occurrence of these strategies. As a method of data collection was used a questionnaire survey.

Results: Most frequently emerged harm reduction strategies among cannabis users are in relation to the effects of use on physical health. Most of these strategies focus on minimising the harms associated with smoking cannabis, particularly marijuana cigarettes. Mental health strategies are based on the concept of set, where users often do not use if they observe negative feelings and emotions, and setting, where users often emphasise use in a familiar and safe environment, in the presence of people they know or who are also cannabis users. In order to avoid the social consequences of use, users follow strategies that primarily regulate the times when they use and the circle of people in whose presence they use. Respondents do not use when they have work or school commitments. Strategies focusing on users' personal relationships are often found, therefore users avoid using in the presence of children, parents or partners. Harm reduction strategies followed by the largest number of survey respondents were those related to the legal consequences of use.

Conclusion: The results section of the study provides a complex description of the harm reduction strategies of cannabis users, which is missing in the research literature. The findings of this study can be used in specific primary prevention, or to provide better information on harm reduction to cannabis users, this information should be complex and easy to obtain. These findings can be also used when working with users in contact with addiction services.

Key words: cannabis drugs, harm reduction, risk minimization, negative impacts of drug use