



Concerns: Pot and Adherence

Many people with HIV use marijuana to improve appetite, manage pain or relieve depression or anxiety.

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Older people living with HIV who recently used cannabis are about twice as likely as nonusers to sometimes miss doses of their antiretroviral medications, according to a recent study. Many people with HIV use marijuana to improve appetite, manage pain or relieve depression or anxiety. Researchers looked at the link between cannabis use and treatment adherence among 1,011 participants ages 40 or older in a long-term study of HIV-positive adults. All were on antiretroviral therapy, and most had an undetectable viral load. Within this group, 18% reported current cannabis use (during the past month), 6% reported intermittent use (during the past year but not the last month) and 76% had not used cannabis within the past year or ever. Current cannabis users were 53% more likely to report less than perfect adherence than nonusers. Among people who missed at least one dose during the past week, 21% were current cannabis users, 19% were intermittent users and 10% were nonusers. When the data were broken out by sex, the association was statistically significant for men but not for women.

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