# Increase in Daily Marijuana Use Surpasses Alcohol Consumption in the U.S., Study Reveals



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A recent study published in the peer-reviewed journal *Addiction* reveals that daily or near-daily marijuana use in the United States has surpassed daily or near-daily alcohol consumption for the first time. In 2022, approximately 17.7 million people reported frequent marijuana use, compared to 14.7 million who drank alcohol at a similar rate. The findings derive from over four decades of data collected by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, encompassing responses from over 1.6 million participants between 1979 and 2022.

Despite more Americans drinking alcohol overall, the median number of drinking days in a month was significantly lower in 2022, averaging four to five days, compared to 15 to 16 days for cannabis use. The study highlights a substantial increase in frequent marijuana use, correlating with changes in cannabis legislation over the past few decades, although it states that policy changes are not necessarily a causal factor.

As of now, 38 states and Washington, D.C. have legalized medical marijuana, and 24 states have approved its recreational use. Recent recommendations from Attorney General Merrick Garland suggest easing federal restrictions on marijuana, potentially expanding access and benefiting state-level cannabis industries.

One of the study’s authors, Jonathan Caulkins of Carnegie Mellon University, noted an increasing trend towards using more potent forms of marijuana, such as edibles and vapes, in addition to traditional smoking. He also pointed out potential health risks, such as cognitive impairment and cannabis use disorder. The research found that daily cannabis use is particularly prevalent among older adults, with those aged 35 and older recording slightly higher usage rates than younger users.

Parallel research involving over 100 participants in London also indicated that adolescents experience more severe cognitive effects from marijuana use compared to adults, regardless of the amount or strength consumed. Researchers suggest this could be due to the ongoing development of adolescent brains, making them more vulnerable to the adverse effects of cannabis.

These findings come amidst a broader discourse on the public health implications of increasing cannabis use and call attention to the need for informed policy-making to manage potential risks associated with frequent marijuana consumption.