

Press Release  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Study Warns Over Cannabis Use as Self-Medication**

A recent study published in Britain showed that people who are self-medicating with cannabis had higher levels of paranoia, anxiety and depression than recreational users, the largest survey into the drug has found. The three-year study, published under two reports, was the first to investigate why users decided to start using it and how this reason affected the length of time they took it.

A total of 3,389 former and current users aged 18 and over completed the Cannabis and Me survey as part of the study. The first study report revealed that, on average, users consumed 10 to 17 joints per week or 206 units of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main psychoactive compound in cannabis. It found that those who began using the drug to cope with anxiety, depression, or because others in their household were already using it, consumed significantly higher weekly amounts.

The second study focused on the relationship between childhood trauma, paranoia and cannabis use. More than half of the respondents reported experiencing some form of trauma, the research found. This is the first UK study to look at specific cannabis use, with very detailed measures of cannabis use, and its health effects on people who use. Those people who use cannabis for more social, recreational purposes tended to have fewer problems and use less cannabis in the long term. Findings showed that those who use cannabis to manage mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression, or because family members were using it, had a higher level of cannabis use and greater risk as the data showed people using cannabis to deal with anxiety or depression used much more weed – on average, 248 and 255 units of THC a week, respectively.

By comparison, those using for “fun” or “curiosity” had lower scores for paranoia and anxiety, results showed.

The study provides data on how the reason someone first starts using cannabis can dramatically impact their long-term health and suggests that using cannabis as a means to self-medicate physical or mental discomfort can have a negative impact on the levels of paranoia, anxiety and depression.

Researchers maintain their clinical experience shows there are groups of people who start to use cannabis as a means of coping with physical and emotional pain. Data has confirmed that this is not without significant further risk to their health and well-being, and policy makers across the world should be mindful of the impact that legalization, without adequate public

prevention education and health support, could have on both the individual, as well as on health care systems more broadly.

The Cannabis and Me study was funded by the Medical Research Council and jointly led by the University of Bath and King's College London.

SAFE is the only alcohol and substance use prevention agency in Glen Cove whose mission is to eliminate alcohol and substance use in Glen Cove. Its Coalition is concerned about cannabis use- especially in youth as their brains are developing. The Coalition is conducting a prevention awareness campaign entitled "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE; Underage Cannabis Use," to educate and update the community regarding cannabis use and its negative consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](https://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or visit SAFE's website to learn more about Cannabis/Marijuana use at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).