

Métis Youth Perceptions of Cannabis Use in Their Communities

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Overview

- Introduction
- Key terminology
- Cannabis Act
- Media Use and Act
- Legalization Regulations
- 3 Primary concerns around Legislation and Legalization for Youth

Introduction



Key Terminology

Youth / Young People

Mental Health Vs Mental Illness

Cannabis Act

Canada legalized and regulated non-medical cannabis in October 2018, and in the lead up to this policy change much debate was generated around the Federal Government's stated objective of "keeping cannabis out of the hands of children and youth".

Media and The Act

Canadian Medical Association Journal published an article called "Cannabis legislation fails to protect Canada's youth," where they made note of "If Parliament truly cares about the public health and safety of Canadians, especially our youth, this bill will not pass" (Kelsall 2017, E738)

"Kids will be able to possess weed under federal marijuana legislation" Regina Leader Post

Legalization Regulations

Domains of cannabis legalization regulation pertaining to youth are enacted at multiple levels of government. Federally Bill C-45 is the act to legalize cannabis and sets the minimum age of access as 18 however most provinces set their minimum age at 18/19 to align with existing alcohol and tobacco laws.

Municipal authorities are responsible for regulating retail licenses and setting out protections (proximity to schools and childcare centers)

Despite the multi level government approach it is important to note all levels of government have a mandate to ensure public awareness of the laws and bylaws including potential health risks and guidelines for safer cannabis use

Concerns with the legalization of Cannabis

Three central issues specific when looking at the legislation:

1. that use by youth would increase,
2. that any use before age 25, but specifically pre-adult age, causes irreversible harm to developing brains, and
3. that adolescent use would be associated with increased incidence of severe mental illness

Whats next?

- More research to understanding if connections exist between Métis people, Youth and Cannabis use
- Shifting perspective from abstinence to harm reduction model

Thank you
for listening!