

Study Finds That 14% of Undergraduate Students Report Synthetic Cannabinoid Use



Synthetic cannabinoid use among college students at a Southeastern university is concentrated in males and in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) community, according to the first known study to obtain a detailed profile of users of any type of synthetic cannabinoid.

Overall, 14 percent of undergraduate students reported lifetime use of synthetic cannabinoids, with an average initiation age of 18. Males were twice as likely as females (19 vs. 9 percent) to report synthetic cannabinoid use.

Sexual orientation was also found to be related to synthetic cannabinoid use. Students who self-identified themselves as LGBT were nearly twice as likely as heterosexual students (27 vs. 14 percent) to report lifetime use, and reported use was equally high among both male and female LGBT students.

The study also found that lifetime use of synthetic cannabinoids was virtually non-existent among those who did not report past month alcohol (0.3 percent) or marijuana (0.4 percent) use, compared to 16 percent and 24 percent, respectively, of past month users of these substances.

According to the authors, "future research should investigate the higher use among [LGBT individuals], and prevention efforts may be most effective when reaching out to the LGBT community".

Editor's Note: It is impossible to determine the types of synthetic cannabinoids contained in synthetic marijuana products without specific testing—studies have shown that the types and amounts of synthetic cannabinoids can vary greatly between products, lots, and even within the same package¹. In reality, youth who report using synthetic marijuana likely have no idea what specific synthetic cannabinoid they are using or what the effects will be.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Stogner, J.M. and Miller, B.L., "A Spicy Kind of High: A Profile of Synthetic Cannabinoid Users," Journal of Substance Use