

Introduction

- Older adults are at an increased risk of physical and psychiatric symptoms.
- This population increasingly turns to Medicinal Cannabis (MC) to treat these symptoms.
- However, due to a lack of rigorous randomized control studies (RCTs), the efficacy of medicinal cannabis remains unclear, especially among older adults.
- While MC use may result in therapeutic effects for physical/medical symptoms, there is also evidence of counter-therapeutic effects for psychiatric symptoms.
- The current study examines changes in physical and psychiatric symptoms at the daily level after using medical cannabis

Method

Participants & Procedure: Older adults ($n = 106$; $M =$, SD) with a medical cannabis card completed daily monitoring of physical and psychiatric symptoms for two weeks.

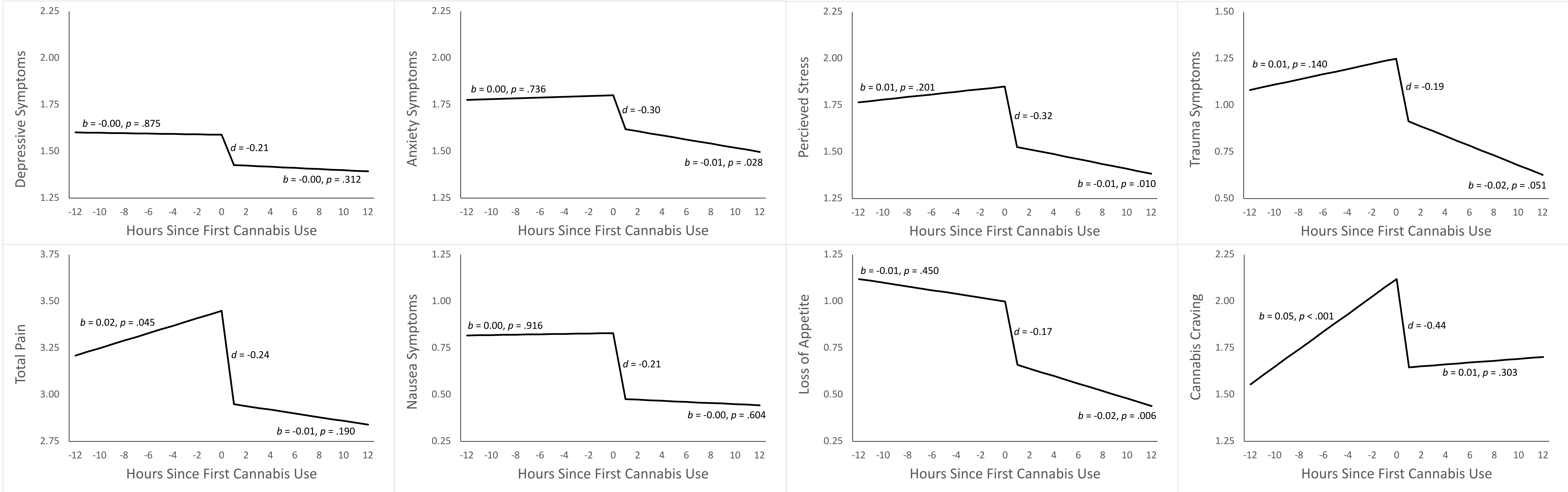
Design: Participants completed an online screen to assess eligibility. They were further interviewed in person to confirm eligibility. If eligible, they were enrolled in an EMA study where they received 6 random surveys/day.

Measures: Random surveys assessed if the participant had started using cannabis yet and current physical and psychiatric symptoms.

Results

Primary Analysis: The analysis used 3-level multilevel growth models with time nested within day. Time centered at the individuals first MC use of that day. A variable for Pre/Post use was used to separate days, and an interaction between Time to Use and Use Point was included in the model (see Table). There were 4,978 time points nested in 929 days across 106 individuals. A separate model was run for each symptom. There were random variance components for intercepts at levels 2 and 3 and a random slope for Use point. There was no random variance component for the Time slope.

Outcomes	Hours		Use		Hours x Use		Intercept at Use	
Depression Symptoms	-0.001	.875	-0.161	<.001	-0.002	.746	1.586	<.001
Anxiety Symptoms	0.002	.736	-0.269	<.001	<i>-0.013</i>	.060	1.799	<.001
Perceived Stress	0.007	.201	-0.309	<.001	-0.019	.005	1.854	<.001
Trauma Symptoms	0.014	.140	-0.307	.006	-0.037	.004	1.246	<.001
Pain Symptoms	0.017	.045	-0.491	<.001	-0.026	.011	3.453	<.001
Nausea Symptoms	0.001	.916	-0.350	.009	-0.004	.719	0.833	<.001
Loss of Appetite	-0.010	.450	-0.321	.036	-0.014	.337	1.000	<.001
Cannabis Craving	0.047	<.001	-0.478	<.001	-0.042	<.001	2.115	<.001



Discussion

Across all analyses, symptoms improved dramatically following medical cannabis use. In some cases (Anxiety, Stress, Trauma, Loss of Appetite), the decline in symptoms was also followed by continued improvement across the day. However, there was also a sharp increase in Cannabis craving leaving up to use, a dramatic decline following use, and a slight increase following first use – all of which are hallmarks of drug dependence.