



Anxiety and Changes in Psilocybin Use among Cannabis Consumers during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Findings from COVID-19 Cannabis Health Study

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BACKGROUND

- In tandem with the surge in the prevalence of anxiety amid COVID-19 pandemic, exploration and research of alternative and naturalistic treatments as anxiolytics has been burgeoning.
- Psilocybin, a fungi-based psychedelic substance, has shown potential in reducing anxiety levels; however, its co-use with cannabis is under-documented.
- This analysis aims to explore the prevalence of anxiety and patterns of psilocybin use among cannabis consumers at times of public health crisis, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

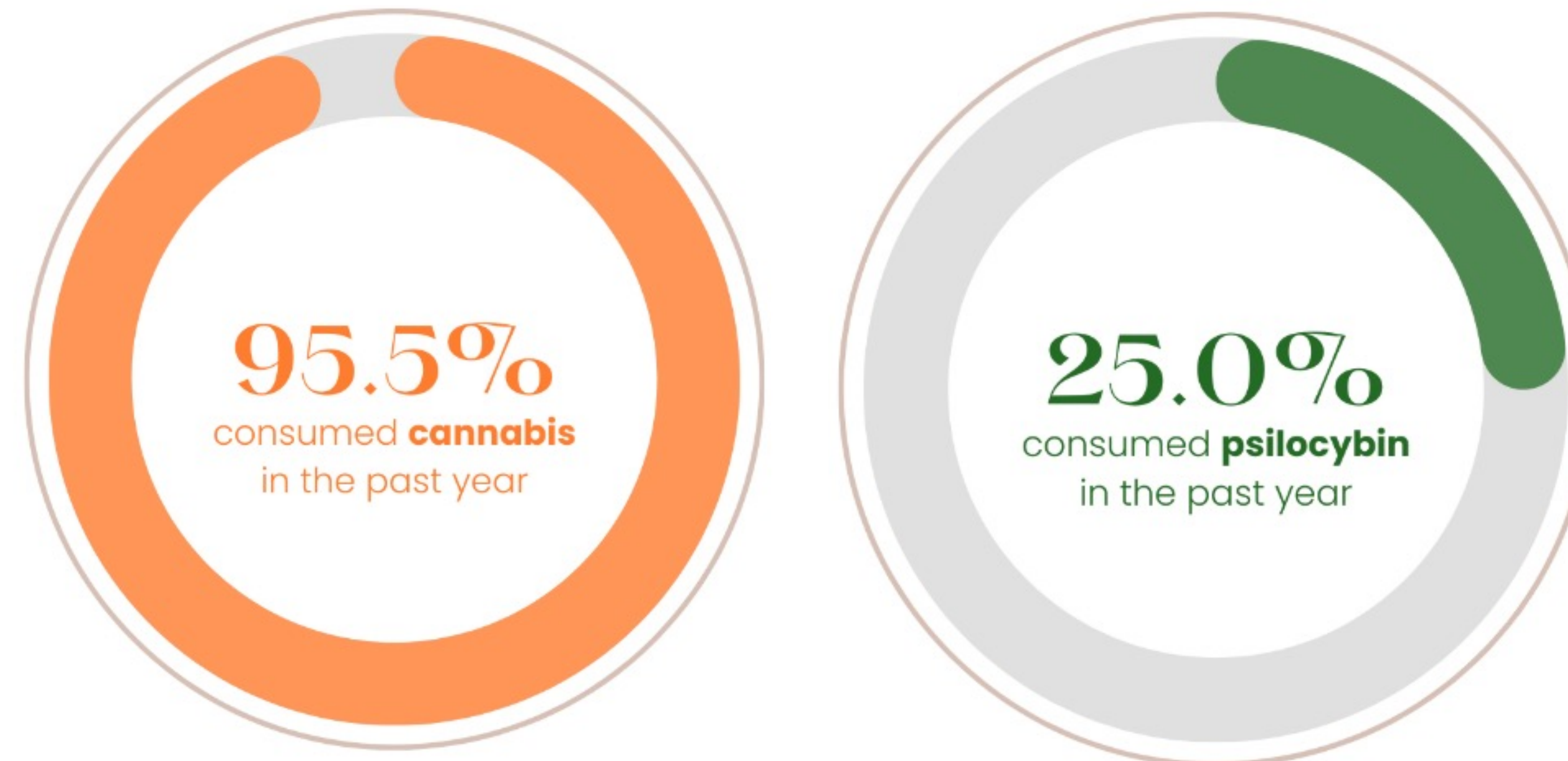
METHODS

- Global COVID-19 Cannabis Health Study (N=2,816)
- Conducted via a REDCap electronic survey from March 2020 to March 2023
- Self-reported cannabis and psilocybin use
- Anxiety assessed using Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7)
- Standardized cut-offs applied to categorize anxiety levels (minimal, mild, moderate, severe)
- Descriptive statistics utilized
- Chi-Square/Fisher's exact tests conducted using SAS Analytics

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RESULTS



ANXIETY BY PSILOCYBIN					
ANXIETY	MORE USE SINCE COVID-19	LESS USE SINCE COVID-19	NO CHANGE SINCE COVID-19	NEVER USED	TOTAL
Mild	27 (25.96%)	21 (32.31%)	153 (30.30%)	513 (26.90%)	714 (27.66%)
Minimal	31 (29.81%)	19 (39.23%)	180 (35.64%)	774 (40.59%)	1004 (38.90%)
Moderate	27 (25.96%)	17 (26.15%)	107 (21.19%)	345 (18.09%)	496 (19.22%)
Severe	19 (18.27%)	8 (12.31%)	65 (12.87%)	275 (14.42%)	367 (14.22%)
Total	104 (4.03%)	65 (2.52%)	505 (19.57%)	1907 (73.89%)	2581 (100%)

Figure 1: Results of Beck Anxiety Inventory by Psilocybin Use

KEY FINDINGS

- 95.5% consumed cannabis in the past year and 25.0% consumed psilocybin.
- The average GAD-7 score among cannabis consumers was found to be 7.4 (SD=5.5) indicating mild anxiety. 40.6% of cannabis consumers who never consumed psilocybin had minimal anxiety.
- There was a significant difference in anxiety and changes in psilocybin use ($p=0.04$); 35.6% of cannabis consumers that have consumed psilocybin but had no change to their psilocybin use since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic were found to also have minimal anxiety.
- In contrast, of the cannabis consumers that decreased their psilocybin use, 32.3% were found to have mild anxiety.
- Among those with an increase in their psilocybin use, 26.0% were found to have mild anxiety and 26.0% were found to have moderate anxiety.

CONCLUSION

- Findings suggest an association between changes in psilocybin use patterns during the pandemic with varying anxiety levels.
- Given the increasing co-use of psychedelics and cannabis along with growing research on their impact in mental health treatment, future studies are warranted to determine whether changes in use at times of public health crisis directly impacts anxiety levels or vice versa.