



COVID-19 History Differences between Emerging Adult Cannabis Consumers and Non-Consumers: Preliminary Results from the Herbal Heart Study

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BACKGROUND

Cannabis and COVID

- ✦ The COVID-19 pandemic impacted health and societal norms globally, prompting widespread changes in behaviors.
- ✦ Evidence showed that there was a surge in cannabis consumption during the pandemic especially among the younger population.
- ✦ Yet, there is a dearth in literature reporting COVID-19 associated behaviors among young adults by cannabis consumption status.

OBJECTIVE

- ✦ Analysis COVID-19 history among young adult (18-35-year-olds) cannabis consumers and non-consumers in South Florida.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

- ✦ Data are from the ongoing Herbal Heart Study, examining the effect of cannabinoids and cannabis administration routes on subclinical cardiovascular risk among healthy young adults in South Florida.
- ✦ Cannabis user (CU) group: 18-35 year old individuals who consume cannabis via blunts, vapes, and/or joints at least once a week
 - ✦ Blunt – cannabis with added tobacco
 - ✦ Joint – cannabis with no tobacco added
 - ✦ Vape – cannabis use via a cartridge
- ✦ Non-user (NU) group: 18-35 year old individuals who do not use cannabis

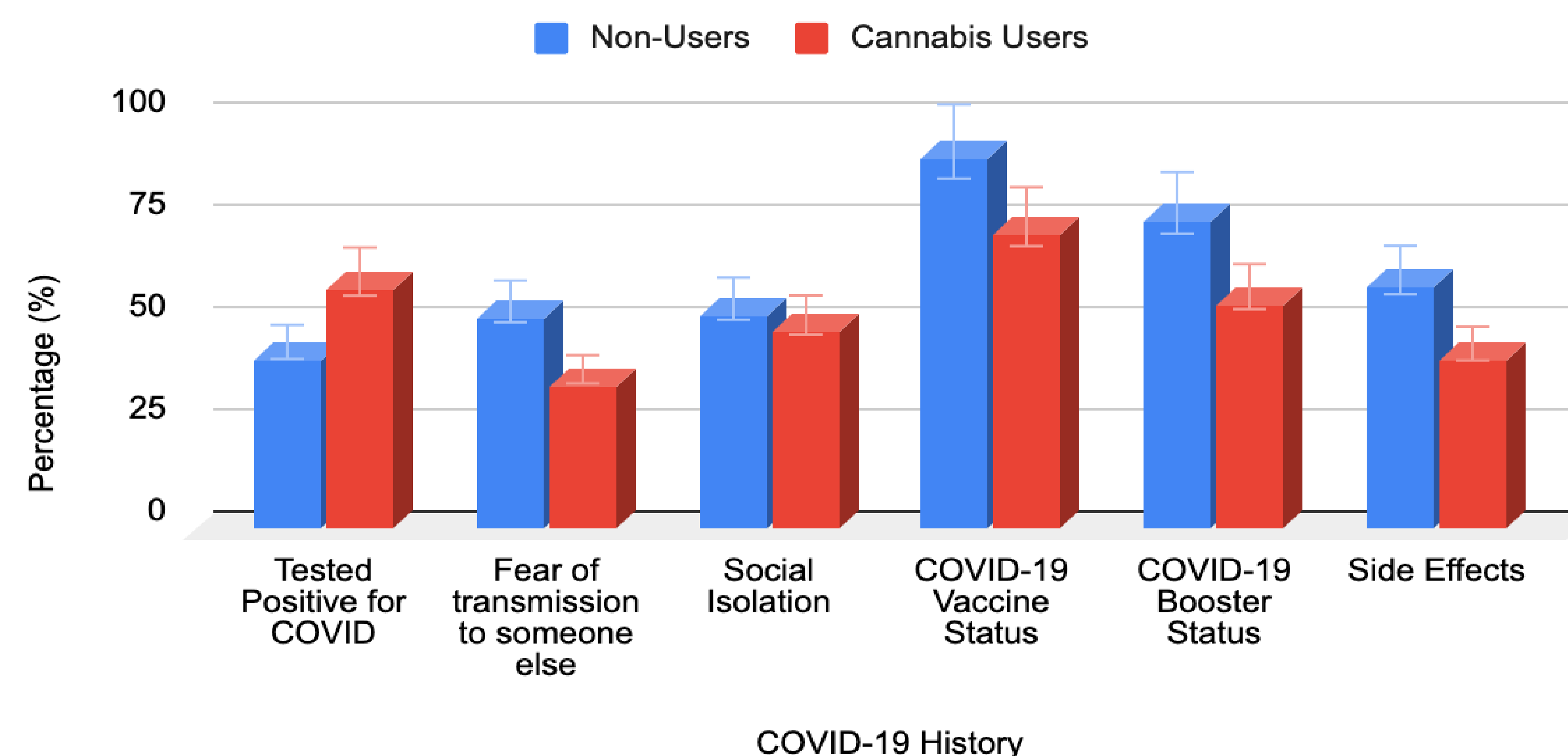
MEASURES

- ✦ COVID-19 history responses were self-reported via the COVID-19 Cannabis Health Questionnaire via PhenX toolkit.
- ✦ Descriptive statistics and Chi-squared/Fisher's exact tests, where applicable, analyzed COVID-19 history in cannabis users (CUs) and non-users (NUs).

DATA AND RESULTS

- ✦ About half (49.3%) of the sample lived or stayed with individuals experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or tested positive, of which 54.2% were CUs.
- ✦ 58.6% of respondents testing positive for COVID-19 were CUs.
- ✦ Fear of transmitting the virus to someone else reported by 51.3% of NUs and 34.7% of CUs ($p=0.040$).
- ✦ Since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, 83.9% of the sample reported isolating themselves and of these 52.0% were NUs.
- ✦ While a majority received the COVID-19 vaccine (81.1%), the proportion differed significantly between CUs and NUs (72.0% vs 90.4%, $p<.01$).
- ✦ Furthermore, a higher percentage of non-users (75.4%) received the booster shot compared to cannabis users (54.9%, $p=0.022$).
- ✦ Among recipients experiencing side effects, 59.0% were non-users.

Figure 1: COVID-19 History Differences Among Non-Users and Cannabis Users



DISCUSSION

- ✦ It was found that cannabis users were less likely than non-users to:
 - ✦ Socially isolate themselves
 - ✦ Get the vaccine and boosters
 - ✦ Fear transmitting the virus to their peers
- ✦ Both groups had high access (98%) to COVID testing and 97.3% had undergone testing since the beginning of the pandemic

CONCLUSION

- ✦ Findings revealed that CUs had higher prevalence of self-reported exposure to the virus and lower engagement in preventive measures, such as self-isolation.
- ✦ Disparities in vaccine uptake and booster shot receipt highlight the need for tailored public health interventions to address the unique challenges and perceptions within the CU population during the ongoing pandemic.
- ✦ Future studies are needed to further analyze the role cannabis played in individual's behaviors and susceptibility during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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