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L. D. Garfield
Saint Louis University

A. E. Duncan
Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis

J. F. Scherrer
Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis

K. K. Bucholz
Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis

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CANNABIS USE, ABUSE AND DEPENDENCE AND PANIC SYMPTOMS, ATTACKS AND DISORDER IN ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS

L.D. Garfield¹, A.E. Duncan², J.F. Scherrer^{2,3}, K.K. Bucholz²
²Washington U. School of Medicine, St. Louis MO 63108, ³Saint
Louis Veterans Administration Medical Center, ¹Saint Louis
University School of Public Health



Contact: garfield@slu.edu

BACKGROUND

- Previous research suggests that panic and anxiety disorders and substance use disorders co-occur
- The relationship between panic disorder and cannabis use, abuse and dependence is not well characterized in adolescents and young adults

OBJECTIVE

- To examine the relationships between cannabis use, abuse and dependence and panic symptoms/attacks/disorder in adolescents and young adults

METHODS: Subjects

Twins as Parents (TAP) study (2000-present)

- Fathers
 - 910 twin fathers sampled from the Vietnam Era Twin Registry with at least 1 child 12-28 yrs old in 2000
 - Twin pairs either concordant or discordant for psychoactive substance use disorders (primarily MJ A/D). Controls were unaffected twin pairs
 - 725 (80%) responded to diagnostic telephone interview
- Mothers
 - 601 eligible biological and/or rearing mothers with consent from twin
 - 428 (71%) responded to diagnostic telephone interview
- Offspring
 - 986 eligible offspring with consent from father and/or mother
 - 832 (84%) responded to diagnostic telephone interview

METHODS: Assessment

Offspring report:

- Lifetime DSM-IV cannabis use, abuse and dependence
- Lifetime DSM-IV:
 - Panic Disorder
 - Panic Attack
 - Panic Symptoms

MEASURES:

- Symptoms of a Panic Attack
 - Developed abruptly and peaked w/in 10 min:
 - 1) Heart palpitations
 - 2) Sweating
 - 3) Trembling/shaking
 - 4) Shortness of breath
 - 5) Choking feeling
 - 6) Chest Pain
 - 7) Nausea/abdominal pain
 - 8) Dizzy/lightheaded
 - 9) Derealization/depersonalization
 - 10) Fear of losing control
 - 11) Fear of dying
 - 12) Paresthesias
 - 13) Chills/hot flushes

MEASURES: DSM-IV Panic Attack and Panic Disorder

- Full DSM-IV criteria for panic attack (PA)
 - *Discrete period of intense fear or discomfort, in which 4 or more symptoms developed abruptly and reached a peak within 10 minutes*
- Full DSM-IV criteria for panic disorder (PD)
 - *Recurrent unexpected panic attacks, at least one attack followed by one month of: either persistent concern, worry, change in behavior*

MEASURES: Cannabis Use

- Among all respondents:
 - Ever used
 - Regular use (≥ 6 times in life)
 - Current use (past 12 months)
 - DSM-IV cannabis abuse/dependence
- Among users only:
 - Regular use (≥ 6 times in life)
 - Current use (past 12 months)
 - DSM-IV cannabis abuse/dependence
 - Lifetime quantity

METHODS: Data Analysis

- Measures of Association:
 - Chi-square
 - Odds Ratio (OR)

RESULTS

Table 1: Number of panic attack symptoms reported by level of cannabis use. NOTE: values with the same superscripts differ significantly from one another ($p \leq .05$)

	None <i>n</i> =612	1-3 <i>n</i> =78	4+ <i>n</i> =143	X ² p-value
Ever used	51.8% ^{ab}	64.1% ^a	69.9% ^b	<0.001
Regular use*	36.9% ^{ab}	48.7% ^a	50.4% ^b	.004
Current use**	11.4% ^a	7.7% ^b	18.2% ^{ab}	.038
Among users only:	<i>n</i> =317	<i>n</i> =50	<i>n</i> =100	
Regular use*	71.5%	76.0%	72.0%	.789
Current use**	22.1%	12.0%	26.0%	.145

* ≥ 6 times

**within the past 12 months

Table 2: Offspring meeting DSM-IV criteria for panic attack by level of cannabis use

	YES (n=95)	NO (n=742)	OR	95% CI
Ever use	78.5%	53.2%	3.21	1.91-5.37
Regular use*	54.8%	38.5%	1.94	1.26-2.99
Current use**	19.4%	11.4%	1.87	1.07-3.29
Among users only:	(n=73)	(n=394)		
Regular use*	69.9%	72.3%	0.87	0.51-1.53
Current use**	24.7%	21.3%	1.21	0.67-2.17

* ≥ 6 times

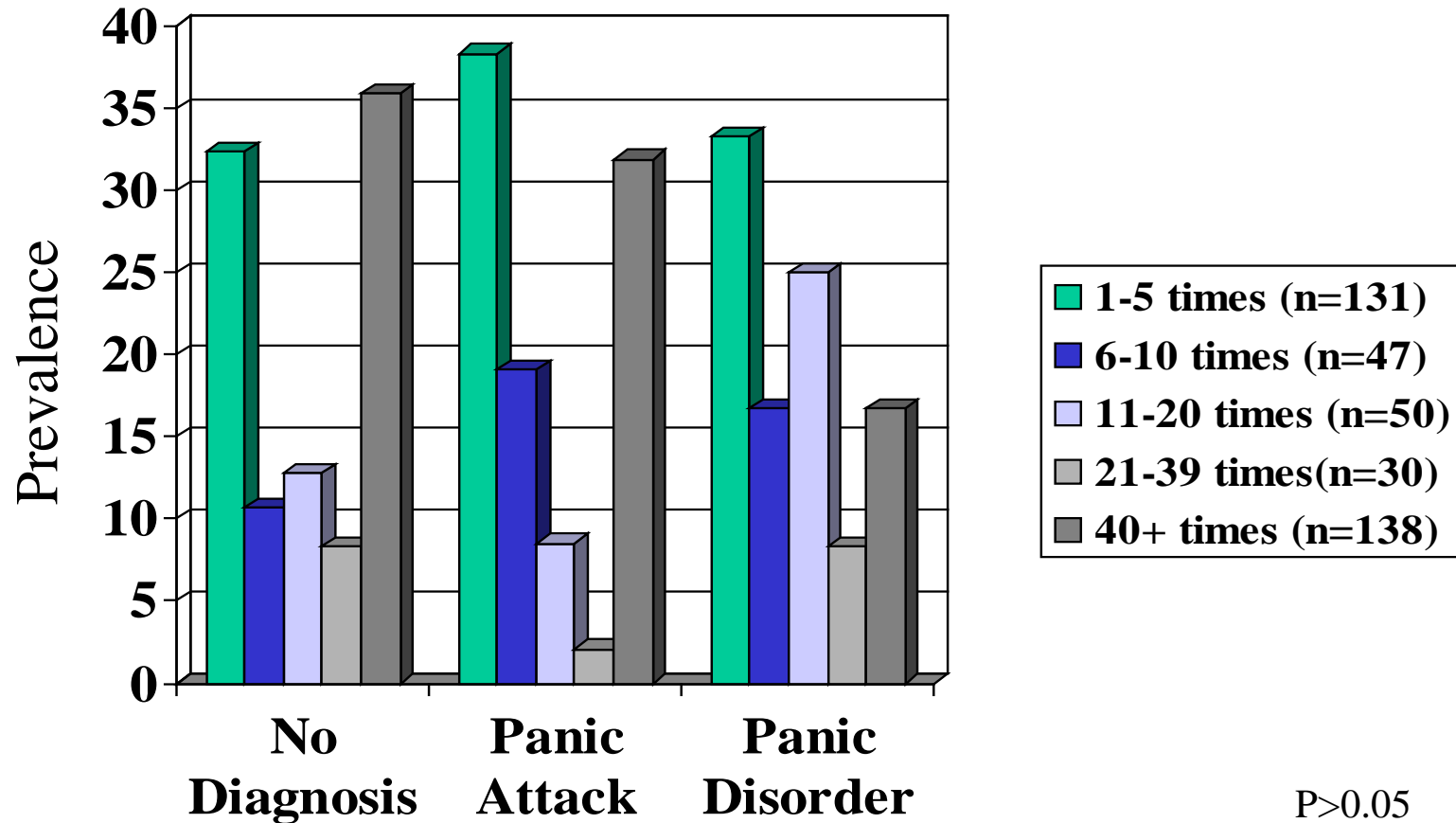
**within the past 12 months

Table 3: Offspring meeting 3-level DSM-IV panic disorder criteria by level of cannabis use. NOTE: values with the same superscripts differ significantly from one another ($p \leq .01$)

	No Diagnosis <i>n</i> =742	Panic Attack <i>n</i> =70	Panic Disorder <i>n</i> =24	X ² p-value
Ever use	53.2% ^a	81.2% ^a	70.8%	<0.001
Regular use*	38.5% ^a	55.1% ^a	54.2%	0.010
Abuse/dependence	21.0% ^a	34.8% ^a	33.3%	0.013
Among users only:	<i>n</i> =394	<i>n</i> =56	<i>n</i> =17	
Regular use*	72.3	67.9	76.5	.717
Abuse/dependence	39.3	42.9	47.1	.736

* ≥ 6 times

Figure 1: Lifetime quantity/number times used cannabis by 3-level DSM-IV PD diagnosis



CONCLUSIONS

- Panic symptoms, attack and disorder are associated with cannabis use but not regular use, current use or abuse/dependence among cannabis users
- Further research is needed to:
 - Adjust for the paternal drug use history (environment and genetics), age and gender
 - Derive multivariate models to determine which other psychiatric and substance use disorders contribute to the panic/cannabis use relationship
 - Examine temporal relationship between panic and cannabis use