Cannabis and Cannabidiol Use in Active Individuals: A Survey of Timing and Reasons for Use

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ABSTRACT

The use of cannabis for medicinal and recreational purposes is widespread across the globe. However, relatively little is known regarding the use of cannabis and its constituents among athletic populations. **PURPOSE**: The aim of this study was to examine timing of cannabis use relative to exercise, reasons for use, forms of consumption, and sources of information in active adults. **METHODS**: This cross-sectional survey was administered electronically beginning in September 2020. Participants were recruited through social media advertisements, email blasts, and word of mouth. Data were collected on health and exercise habits, use of cannabis/cannabidiol (CBD), reasons for use, form of consumption, and sources of information. **RESULTS**: 231 participants (82% ♂) completed the survey. Most participants exercised ≥3 d · wk^{-1} (84%) for ≥45 minutes a session (79.7%). Endurance sports were most common (47%), followed by functional/resistance training (11.3%) and sports participation (7.4%). 55% of the population self-described as "recreational exercisers" and 45% self-described as "competitive athletes". 74% of participants reported using cannabis with THC, 15% reported using both cannabis with THC and CBD, and 11% only used CBD. 44% of participants used cannabis before and after exercise, with another 26% using cannabis after exercise only. 45% reported using cannabis before exercise for psychological reasons, while only 14% reported using for physiological reasons. Of those who only used cannabis after exercise, 36% reported using cannabis for psychological reasons, with 28% using it for rehabilitative purposes. Family/friends were the primary source of information (16%), followed by other media (14.5%; social media, podcasts, blogs, etc.), doctor or healthcare provider (14%), news media (13.3%), and sports coaches, teammates, and other athletes (12.8%). **CONCLUSION**: Results of the present study add to the meager data on cannabis use, exercise, and their interaction. It appears most active individuals believe that cannabis and CBD can improve the psychological aspects of exercise and assist with recovery from exercise. Adequately powered, well-controlled and conducted randomized trials are needed to further determine the influence of cannabis consumption on exercise performance and recovery.