Examining Associations between Cannabis Use, Desire to Quit Cannabis, and Discrimination Experiences among a Sample of Young Sexual Minority Women

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Introduction

- Sexual Minority Women (SMW) use cannabis at higher rates than heterosexual women
- According to Minority Stress Theory (Meyer, 2003), SMW may have higher rates of cannabis use, relative to other groups, due to experiencing discrimination related to their sexual minority identity. That is, they may use cannabis to cope with experiencing discrimination.
- Despite elevated rates of use, few studies have investigated the role of discrimination on cannabis use and desire to quit using cannabis.
- **This study examined associations between cannabis use, desire to quit cannabis, and discrimination experiences among SMW.**

Method

Participants and Procedure

- *N* = 283 SMW who reported weekly cannabis use in the past 30-days and completed a brief online survey through Amazon Mechanical Turk

Materials

Cannabis Use Frequency

- "In the past 30 days, on how many days did you use marijuana?" (range 1-30)

Desire to Quit Cannabis

- Modified from the Motivation to Stop Scale (Kotz et al., 2013)
- "Which of the following best describes you?"
- 1 = I don't want to stop using marijuana to 7= I really want to stop using marijuana and intend to in the next month

Discrimination Distress

- Daily Heterosexist Experiences Questionnaire (DHEQ; Balsam et al., 2013)
- 1 = not bothered at all to 5 = bothered me extremely
- Subscales: vigilance, harassment and discrimination, victimization, family origin, vicarious trauma, isolation
- See Table 1 for example items for each scale

Data Analysis

- Correlation analyses examined the study Aim

Method Continued

Table 1. Example Item for Each DHEQ Subscale

Vigilance	"Watching what you say and do around heterosexual people."
Harassment/Discrimination	"Being verbally harassed by people you know because you are LGBT."
Victimization	"Being raped or sexually assaulted because you are LGBT."
Family Origin	"Being rejected by your father for being LGBT."
Vicarious Trauma	"Hearing someone make jokes about LGBT people."
Isolation	"Having very few people you can talk to about being LGBT."

Results

Table 2. Demographic Information of Sample

Variable	M	SD
Age	24.29	1.37
	n	**%**
Race		
Non-Hispanic White	244	86.2
Non-Hispanic Black	3	1.1
Non-Hispanic Other Race	4	1.4
Hispanic	31	11.0
Education		
HS Diploma/GED	16	5.7
Some College	106	37.5
College Degree	97	34.3
Graduate Degree	64	22.6
Relationship Status		
Single	63	22.3
In a Relationship	41	14.5
Married	179	63.3
Income		
<= $29,999	18	10.4
$30,000-$39,999	20	7.1
$40,000-$49,999	31	11.0
$50,000-$59,999	72	25.4
$60,000-$69,999	36	12.7
$70,000-$79,999	62	21.9
>= $80,000	44	15.6

Results

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. MJ Use	—							
2. D. to Quit	-.15**	—						
3. Vigilance	.22**	-.07	—					
4. HarDisc	.19**	-.11	.84**	—				
5. Victimize	.19**	-.03	.87**	.85**	—			
6. FamOrg	.22**	-.03	.90**	.90**	.82**	—		
7. Trauma	.36**	-.16**	.81**	.80**	.79**	.82**	—	
8. Isolate	.20**	-.04	.81**	.83**	.79**	.82**	.82**	—
Mean	11.45	2.95	18.35	17.98	12.31	18.36	18.28	12.15
SD	8.37	1.54	4.81	5.14	3.52	5.25	4.79	3.19

Note. DHEQ Subscales: MJ Use = cannabis frequency, D. to Quit = Desire to Quit, HarDisc = harassment and discrimination, Victimize = victimization, FamOrg = family origin, Trauma = vicarious trauma, Isolate = isolation. ** $p < .001$.

Discussion

- Consistent with Minority Stress Theory, experiencing discrimination related to one's sexual identity is associated with greater cannabis use frequency among SMW.
- Findings suggest that developing cannabis use interventions to alleviate distress from discrimination experiences may reduce the rates of use.
- Focusing on reducing the impact of vicarious trauma (e.g., self-affirmative techniques about one's sexual identity) may increase desire to quit cannabis among this high-risk population.

Implications

- Cannabis cessation intervention approaches unique to SMW should be developed (e.g.,, expressive writing, self-affirmation)
  - Cross-sectional: Stress reduction
  - Longitudinal: Lower depression (Chaudoir et al., 2023)
- Raise awareness through interpersonal interventions
  - Social structures may put minority health at risk
  - Empower minority individuals to challenge structure (Chaudoir et al., 2017)
- Adapt existing interventions targeting SM mental/physical health disparities toward minority stress reduction (Chaudoir et al., 2017)

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