

Study: Marijuana Use Associated With Decreased Symptoms Of Opiate Withdrawal In Methadone Maintenance Treatment Subjects

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July 16, 2013

Cannabis consumption is associated with mitigated symptoms of opiate withdrawal in subjects undergoing methadone maintenance treatment, according to the findings of a new study published online in *The American Journal on Addictions*. Investigators at the Farber Institute for Neurosciences at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia assessed the use of cannabis in 91 opiate-dependent subjects undergoing methadone maintenance treatment. Researchers found that subjects seeking methadone treatment who acknowledged a history of cannabis use reported “significantly less daily expenditure on acquisition of opiates.” Authors additionally reported that subjects’ use of cannabis during treatment was associated with less severe symptoms of withdrawal on the clinical opiate withdrawal scale (COWS), an index designed to serve as an objective measure of opiate withdrawal. “[I]ncreased cannabis use was found to be associated with lower severity of [opiate] withdrawal in a subset of the sample with available chart data,” authors wrote. “These results suggested a potential role for cannabis in the reduction of withdrawal severity during methadone induction.” They concluded, “The present findings may point to novel interventions to be employed during treatment for opiate dependence that specifically target cannabinoid-opioid system interactions.” A 2009 study published in the same journal previously reported that moderate cannabis use and improved retention in naltrexone treatment among opiate-dependent subjects.

Full text of the study, “Impact of cannabis use during stabilization on methadone maintenance treatment,” appears online in *The American Journal on Addictions*. See more at:
<http://blog.norml.org/2013/07/16/study-marijuana-use-associated-with-decreased-symptoms-of-opiate-withdrawal-in-methadone-maintenance-treatment-subjects/#sthash.QXUluvum.dpuf>