

# Cannabis Use In New Zealand And Its Consequences

- **8 out of 10 people born in the 1970s have tried cannabis despite its illegal status**
- **The majority of cannabis users do so without any severe health or social consequences**
- **The negative impacts of cannabis use on wellbeing affects only a minority of users (5-10%) who began using cannabis in adolescence and continued into adulthood**
- **Use by adolescents must be restricted**

## Physical Health

Regular cannabis users have 2-3 times the risk of developing gum disease between 26 and 32 years of age

Increased cannabis use increases the risk of poor lung function

Loss of 8 IQ points was found in those who started using cannabis in adolescence and continued into adulthood. This may be permanent

## Credibility

Based on evidence from two internationally renowned University of Otago lifecourse studies in Dunedin and Christchurch

Data collected from approximately 90% of births, in their geographical area, through to participants' fifth decade of life, thus covering the key life stages of cannabis use

These studies cover a broad range of developmental indicators, including biological, physiological, psychological, and social aspects of people's lives

## Mental Health

Early to mid-adolescence users are at 1.5 to 2 times more risk of psychosis disorder by 26 years of age

Earlier frequent cannabis use triggers feeling of depression and suicidal thoughts at a younger age in males

4-10% of 20 year olds showed signs of cannabis dependence

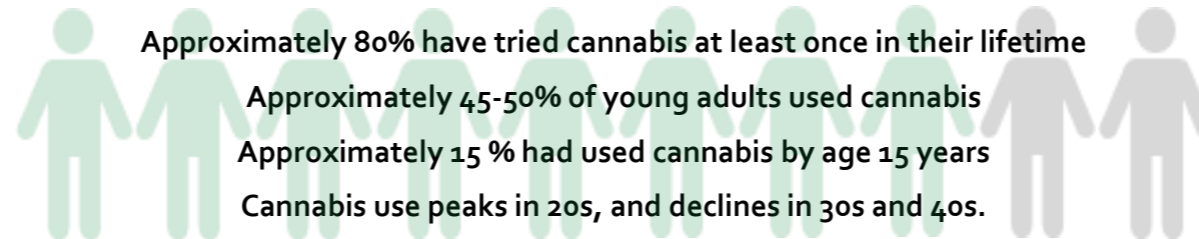
There was 8 times the risk of using other drugs if cannabis was used daily before 17 years of age

## State Support

Compared to non-users, those with high cannabis use during adolescence were:

- 3 times more likely to be unemployed
- 5 times more likely to need state support

## Who Uses Cannabis?



**Approximately 80% have tried cannabis at least once in their lifetime**

**Approximately 45-50% of young adults used cannabis**

**Approximately 15 % had used cannabis by age 15 years**

**Cannabis use peaks in 20s, and declines in 30s and 40s.**

## Driving

Rates of driving under the influence of cannabis was 2.5 times higher than driving under the influence of alcohol (self-reported)

When driving under the influence of cannabis, rates of collisions were 1.4 time higher (self-reported)

## Education

There is a strong relationship between cannabis use before age 18 years and educational under achievement

Those who had used cannabis before 18 years of age were half as likely to complete high school

Those with high cannabis use during adolescence were 74% less likely to complete a tertiary degree

## Criminality

Despite its illegal status approximately 80% of all study participants have tried cannabis at least once

Maori were 3 times more likely to be arrested or convicted for cannabis related offences than non-Maori for the same amount of cannabis

25% of heavy users were arrested or convicted for cannabis related offences

**Nearly 95% of those arrested or convicted for cannabis related offences did not subsequently decrease their usage**

## Earnings & Finance

Those with high cannabis use during adolescence earned 76% of the average income of those that did not

Long-term persistent cannabis users earned \$273 per week less on average than non-users

Long-term cannabis users and those dependent on cannabis were more likely to experience trouble with debt and difficulty paying for basic expenses

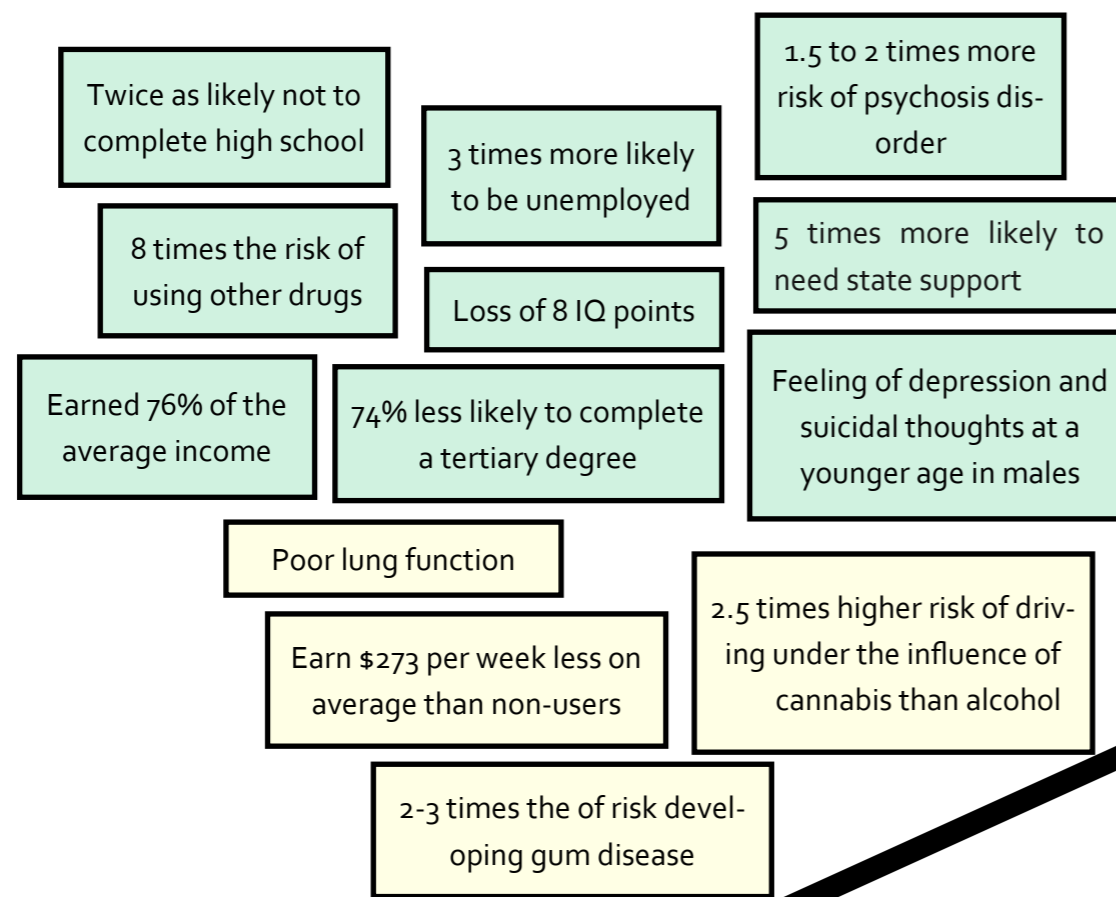
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## The Importance of Age

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### Risks of frequent cannabis use before 18 years old



### Risks of heavy frequent cannabis use after 18 years old

