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Promoting Responsible Cannabis Use Through Education

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Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines (LRCUG)

Cannabis use is associated with the risk of adverse acute and chronic health outcomes. However, most users do not experience severe problems, and risks vary substantially based on user characteristics and use behaviours.

Evidence shows that delaying the onset of use until after adolescence/puberty, avoiding frequent, intensive, and high-potency cannabis use, and using safer modes of administration can substantially reduce the risks of adverse outcomes.

Recommendations advise users to [delay initiation](#), [use legal/regulated products](#), [use low-potency cannabis](#), [avoid smoking and risky inhalation practices](#), [limit frequency of use](#), [avoid impairment before driving](#), and [caution vulnerable groups](#).

Recommendations are intended as an evidence-based prevention tool to educate users on reducing modifiable risks, not as diagnostic criteria. They require effective dissemination and uptake promotion.

Treatment Protocol

Assess patient characteristics: age, sex, frequency/amount of use, method of use, cannabis potency used, mental health status, and other substance use.

Provide education on LRCUG and individualized guidance on risk reduction based on assessment. Emphasise the importance of delaying the onset of use.

For adolescent patients, strongly advise abstaining from use until after puberty/age 18. Discuss the risks of early onset and frequent use for brain development.

Advise choosing regulated, low-potency cannabis products. Caution against extracts/concentrates. Recommend non-smoking routes of use.

Advise occasional to moderate use patterns. Caution against intensive, binge, or chronic frequent use.

Caution about driving or operating machinery when impaired. Advise a 6-hour delay after use before driving.

Advise extra precautions for patients with mental health conditions or cardiovascular risks. Caution women intending to conceive or who are pregnant/breastfeeding.

Emphasize that combining risks (frequent, high-potency use, especially when young) increases harm.

For patients with dependence/cannabis use disorder, emphasize the need for assessment and specialized treatment.

Repeat the assessment at follow-ups. Reinforce LRCUG education and individualised recommendations over time.

References

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