**BACKGROUND**

**Sober living houses (SLHs) offer an abstinence-based environment for people in recovery.** Increased legalization of marijuana for recreational use as well as use of marijuana for medical purposes has put SLH operators and managers in a difficult position regarding how to handle marijuana use among residents. While a substitution strategy may work for some, research is needed on how this approach could impact the recovery of SLH residents.

**AIM:** Examine substance use outcomes for marijuana vs non-marijuana users SLH residents.

**METHODS**

* Observational data from longitudinal study of SLHs from 2018 to 2021.
* 557 new SLH residents at baseline, 6-month, and 12-month follow-up data
* Bivariate tests were conducted to examine differences between residents who had and had not used marijuana in the 6 months prior to baseline
* GEE regression models examined the associations between any self-report of marijuana use the 6 months prior to entering the SLH and other drug outcomes at 6- and 12-month follow-up:
  + Any use of drugs other than marijuana during the past 6 months reported on Timeline Followback (TLFB)
  + Total days of drug use other than marijuana or alcohol on TLFB
  + Any drug problems in past 30 days measured by severity scores >0 on the Addiction Severity Index (ASI) Drug subscale, modified to remove prior 30-day marijuana use

**STUDY POPULATION**

* + Baseline reports of any marijuana use in prior 6 months: 107 (19.2%)
  + 6-Month Interview Completers: 462 (82.9%) completed, 35.7% still at SLH
  + 12-Month Interview Completers: 456 (81.9%) completed, 22.8% still at SLH

**RESULTS**

Bivariate tests for differences between residents who had and who had not used marijuana in the 6 months prior to baseline found significant differences (Ps<0.05) for:

* + - Sex assigned at birth
    - Age group (18-39 vs. over 40)
    - Any substance use for 30 days prior
    - 12-step affiliation
    - Number of 12-step meetings attended in past 6 months
    - Number of days used in past 6 months.

Any past six-month marijuana use was related to significantly (Ps<0.01) to:

* + - Higher odds of any past-6-months drug use other than marijuana
    - More days of drug use other than marijuana in the past 6 months
    - Higher odds of any drug issues on the ASI

**CONCLUSIONS**

* + Marijuana does not appear to have a substitutional role for residents in SLHs.
  + Marijuana use was instead associated with an increase in other drug use and greater drug-related issues.
  + These findings point to a higher overall risk to the recovery efforts of SLH residents who use marijuana.

Elizabeth Mahoney, M.A., Douglas Polcin, Ed.D., Meenakshi Subbaraman, Ph.D., Amy Mericle, Ph.D.

**Does Marijuana Use Impact Other Drug Outcomes for Sober Living House Residents?**



A green and white chart with black text

Description automatically generated