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**Prevalence and associated risk factors of cannabinoid abuse among Egyptian university students: A cross-sectional study**

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Global surveys have highlighted rise in consumption of cannabinoids among residents of both developed and developing countries. Cannabinoids cause severe damage to the cardiovascular, nervous, respiratory, and renal systems, and have been linked with several deaths. Despite these adverse health effects, the use of cannabinoids has rapidly increased. This work seeks to estimate the prevalence of cannabinoid abuse among Egyptian university students and explore the associated risk factors. A cross-sectional study was carried out over 3 months (1st of July-1st of October 2020) and included 2380 students. Participants were subjected to a pre-designed self-administered questionnaire that included demographic data, Addiction Severity Index, and Depression Anxiety Stress Scale. Among the participating students, 4.9% of them reported cannabinoid abuse and 41% reported smoking cigarettes. The most used substances were hashish (96.5%), Strox (41.3%), Bhang (34.4%), voodoo

(34.4%), and Tramadol (31.1%). Gender and social status were also significantly related to rates of substances abuse; most illicit drug users were males (93.1%), and the majority was of low (41.3%) or moderate (50.8%) socioeconomic status. The most significant risk factors associated with substance use were positive history of family conflict (OR=6.48; CI95%: 5.08-8.64,  $p<0.001$ ), encouragement by peers (OR=2.95; CI95%: 1.73-5.05,  $p<0.001$ ), male gender (OR=5.46; CI95%: 2.40-12.44,  $p=0.001$ ), positive history of child abuse (OR=2.85; CI95%: 1.96-3.04,  $p=0.001$ ), having a stay-at-home mother (OR= 1.56, CI95%: 1.19-2.04,  $p=0.001$ ), living in an urban area (OR=2.22; CI95%: 1.53-5.0,  $p=0.002$ ), and positive family history of substance use (OR=1.98; CI95%: 1.48-2.08,  $p=0.045$ ). This study emphasizes the possible significant rise in substance use among university students. Awareness campaigns should target both students and student families.

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