



CLAIM

RESPONSE

Cannabis use lowers IQ by up to 8 points.

- There is little scientific evidence suggesting that cannabis use lowers general intelligence, as measured by IQ. A single study (Meier et al., 2012) is frequently cited to support the claim that cannabis use is associated with declines in IQ of 8 points. Basing any general claim on one study is problematic, especially when the 8-point drop in IQ was found only among a very small subsample of participants (i.e., 38 participants), representing 3.7% of the total sample. Additionally, a more recent review of this same data suggests that the findings linking cannabis use to IQ declines may actually be the result of unmeasured socioeconomic factors (Rogeberg, 2013).
- Interestingly, a more recent (and larger) study found that alcohol use was associated with declines in IQ rather than cannabis use (Mokrysz et al., 2014). The scientists also suggested that early-onset substance use more generally, rather than cannabis use specifically, may lead to lower IQ. In short, the evidence that cannabis use is associated with declines in IQ is very weak.
- It is worth highlighting that different people are impacted by cannabis use differently. Research suggesting that cannabis use can have certain impacts on the brain will not apply to all cannabis users in all situations.

BOTTOM LINE: There is little scientific evidence suggesting that cannabis use is associated with declines in IQ.

REFERENCES:

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Rogeberg, O., 2013. Correlations between cannabis use and IQ change in the Dunedin cohort are consistent with confounding from socioeconomic status. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110, 4251-4254.