

Frequent cannabis use and its effects on dental health

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A recent study published in the *Journal of the American Dental Association*¹ examined the impact of frequent recreational cannabis (FRC) use on dental health using data from 5,656 participants (representing 142.4 million US adults aged 18–59 years) in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). The study assessed untreated coronal and root caries, as well as severe tooth loss.

The study found that 29.34% of participants (approximately 418 million people) reported FRC use, defined as cannabis use at least once a month for a year or more. Compared to non-users, FRC users exhibited higher rates of untreated dental issues: 27.64% had untreated coronal caries (vs. 20.18% of

non-users), 16.44% had untreated root caries (vs. 9.03%), and 6.50% experienced severe tooth loss (vs. 4.23%).

After adjusting for sociodemographic factors, alcohol use, and other covariates, FRC users were found to have a 17% higher likelihood of untreated coronal caries, a 55% higher likelihood of untreated root caries, and a 41% higher likelihood of severe tooth loss. However, these associations were no longer statistically significant after accounting for smoking, suggesting that smoking may mediate the observed effects.

The authors propose that cannabis-related oral health issues may stem from a combination of factors, including:

- Reduced saliva buffering capacity

- Dietary changes associated with cannabis-induced appetite stimulation (favouring high-sugar foods)
- Chronic oral inflammation due to chemicals in cannabis smoke, which can lead to periodontitis and mucosal lesions.

The findings emphasise the importance of dental professionals discussing cannabis use with patients and providing tailored preventive care to mitigate risks.

References

1. Clonan E, Shah P, Clodt M, Laniado N. Frequent recreational cannabis use and its association with caries and severe tooth loss: Findings from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2015–2018. *J Am Dent Assoc* 2025; doi: 10.1016/j.adaj.2024.10.005.

BDJ Jobs publishes whitepaper on trends and predictions in dental recruitment

On 16 January 2025, BDJ Jobs published a recruitment whitepaper: 'The Future of Dental Recruitment in the UK: Trends and Predictions for 2025'. This is BDJ Jobs' third analysis of recruitment and retention of dentists in the UK, in partnership with the British Dental Association (BDA).

Using expert data from BDJ Jobs, the BDA, the General Dental Council (GDC) and the NHS, BDJ Jobs has been able to measure how the market continues to change and provide employers and job seekers with a well-rounded understanding of the various factors affecting recruitment in the industry.

The report looks at oral health in the UK, dentist demographics, economic and labour market context and the dental recruitment market.

The data collected, which covers the period from July 2022 to July 2024, suggest that the impacts of Brexit and COVID-19 are subsiding; however, the issue of dentists looking to reduce their NHS commitment continues to impact the recruitment market.

Contract reform remains an ongoing concern in all four nations, and some

changes have been made to dental contracts, but dentists are still seeking to perform more private work.

Some trends featured in the last whitepaper in 2021 have continued, particularly those relating to pay and geographical distribution.

There is a new government in place since July 2024, and it is as yet unclear how ministers will take forward a series of policy interventions set in motion by their predecessors.

The whitepaper reveals that the 'supply of trained dental professionals' is the top thing individuals believe had the greatest impact on their practice's ability to recruit during 2023, with 80% of those polled saying this was the number one issue. This is followed by 73% who thought that the NHS contract/reluctance to work in the NHS had the greatest impact.

The report concludes 'Evidence shows that from summer 2022 until now, the jobs market in dentistry has moved on from the COVID period to a new phase. [...] On the upside, the economic uncertainty during the period of high inflation and the 2022 budget has eased. [...] A less



disruptive, more consistent period of economic conditions might provide the stability for dentists to enter the recruitment market and practices to expand their workforce. [...] Much will depend on the new Labour government, whilst the ongoing decisions with NHS dentistry continue to bear down on hiring decisions.'

To view the whitepaper, visit <https://www.bdjjobs.com/article/bdjjobswhitepaper25>.