

Differences in reporting of perceived acute effects of alcohol use, marijuana use, and simultaneous alcohol and marijuana use.

Lee CM, et al. Drug Alcohol Depend. 2017.

Abstract

BACKGROUND: Although there are serious negative harms associated with simultaneous alcohol and marijuana (SAM) use, little is known about the self-reported acute effects of SAM use and how they may be similar to or different than effects experienced when using alcohol or marijuana only. The current study examines the perceived acute effects of SAM use, compared to using alcohol or marijuana only, as well as demographic and substance use predictors of overall SAM effects.

METHODS: Participants were a community sample of young adults ages 18-23 participating in a longitudinal study on social role transitions and substance use during young adulthood. Young adults who reported SAM use at least once in their lifetime were selected for the present analyses (N=315; mean age=21.42; 58% female) and reported the effects they experienced from typical alcohol use, marijuana use, and SAM use.

RESULTS: There were significant differences in the extent to which young adults perceived the effects depending on the substances used. Most effects (i.e., clumsy, confused, dizzy, difficulty concentrating) were rated strongest when engaging in SAM use, compared to typical alcohol or marijuana use alone. Feeling high and feeling marijuana effects were rated strongest when engaging in marijuana use alone compared to SAM use, but feeling drunk was greater during SAM use compared to alcohol use alone. Greater alcohol use and increased time spent high during typical SAM use were associated with greater overall SAM effects.

CONCLUSIONS: When young adults engage in SAM use they report experiencing greater negative physiological and cognitive effects.