

## Cannabis use among short- and long-term cancer survivors in Vermont and New Hampshire

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### Abstract

Medical cannabis use is common during cancer treatment, yet less is known about recreational use among cancer survivors, particularly long-term survivors. We surveyed 471 adult survivors (mean age 69.38 years, 51% female, 98% white non-Hispanic, median 9.5 years since primary diagnosis) residing in Vermont or New Hampshire in September 2024 regarding health behaviors, including past-month cannabis use (PMCU). Seventy-four (15.7%) participants reported PMCU. Past-month use correlated with a younger age ( $p < 0.001$ ) yet was similar across other demographics. There was a non-significant trend for greater PMCU for those residing in rural (19.1%) versus micropolitan (16.7%) versus metropolitan (13.9%) communities ( $p\text{-for-trend} = 0.22$ ). PMCU did not differ by state where laws governing recreational cannabis use differ. PMCU was associated with cigarette use ( $p = 0.036$ ) and meeting the threshold for hazardous drinking (26.8% vs. 14.4%;  $p = 0.075$ ) among current drinkers ( $n = 304$ ). PMUC was also associated with lower median scores on the FACT-G7 (20 [IQR: 16, 23] vs. 22 [IQR: 17, 24];  $p = 0.033$ ). Edible products were the most frequently (68.9%) reported method of cannabis use. Primary reasons cited for PMCU related to sleep (41.9%) and pain (39.2%). Understanding lifestyle factors shaping cannabis use among cancer survivors can guide targeted support strategies tailored to patients' needs.

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