



## 2020 DART Virtual Summer Research Day

### Gender Differences in Motivations for Cannabis Use: An Analysis from the Inventory of Drug Taking Situations

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**Background:** There is growing evidence of sex differences in cannabis use; for example, women have a faster temporal progression from first use to disorder and more severe withdrawal symptoms compared to men. There is a critical need to investigate why these differences occur. The purpose of this study was to determine if non-treatment seeking men and women with cannabis use disorder report using cannabis in different situations, have differences in adverse childhood experiences, and report differences in perceived stress. We hypothesized that women would report more use in negative situations compared to men, while men would report use in positive situations more than women. We also hypothesized women would have more adverse childhood experiences than men and greater perceived stress. **Methods:** A total of 105 adults (27 women, *M* age = 25.84 years) who met DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for cannabis use disorder (CUD) were enrolled in an ongoing study investigating the impact of progesterone on stress-related cannabis craving. Participants completed the Inventory of Drug Taking Situations (IDTS), Perceived Stress Scales (PSS), and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) surveys. **Results:** MANOVA's showed women significantly used cannabis for Unpleasant Emotions ( $p < 0.005$ ) and Physical Discomfort ( $p < 0.05$ ) compared to men. In addition, women had significantly higher ACE scores compared to men ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, there was no significant difference between males and females for PSS ( $p = ns$ ). **Conclusions:** These findings suggest that women use cannabis in response to negative situations more often than men. Women were also more likely to report adverse childhood experiences. However, men and women had similar levels of perceived stress. This suggests that interventions focused on managing negative responding may be more effective for women with CUD. Limitations include a small sample size and the unequal number of men and women in the study.