of the disease. “We are trying to find out why this happens so that we can tailor treatment to individuals with greater certainty of success,” Dr. Philip Branton, the scientific director of CIHR’s Institute of Cancer Research, told a news conference announcing the tumour bank. Patients who donate samples will remain anonymous, and the Network’s ethics board will approve any requests researchers make to use the samples. — Compiled by Laura Eggertson, *CMAJ*

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PULSE

Marijuana use by tobacco smokers and nonsmokers: Who is smoking what?

Marijuana is often mixed with tobacco when smoked, and there is increasing evidence that its use by non-tobacco-smoking people may be a gateway to tobacco smoking.¹ Using data from the 2004 Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey,² we determined whether rates of marijuana use were similar among tobacco smokers and nonsmokers 15 years and older.

Of the respondents, 9% (2.4 million) reported using marijuana in the 12 months before the survey. In relation to tobacco smoking, 5% of those who never smoked cigarettes reported

smoking marijuana in the 12-month period (Fig. 1). Those who identified themselves as current cigarette smokers had a substantially higher rate of marijuana use (25%). The rates among current tobacco smokers were higher than the national average across all age groups, even in the oldest group. Of the respondents who were former cigarette smokers, 6% reported using marijuana; the highest rates of use in this group were among those aged 15–24. This finding is important, since marijuana use by former smokers may increase their risk of smoking relapse.

The survey data suggest that marijuana use may represent a consider-

able future public health burden if left unchanged. — Scott T. Leatherdale, Toronto, Ont.; Rashid Ahmed, Kitchener, Ont.; Murray Kaiserman, Ottawa, Ont.

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Fig. 1: Use of marijuana by tobacco smokers (current and former) and nonsmokers in Canada, by age group. Source: 2004 Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey.²