

## **News Release Embargoed until Monday, October 15, 2018, 12:01 a.m. ET**

*Please credit CMAJ, not the Canadian Medical Association (CMA). CMAJ is an independent medical journal; views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of its owner, Joule Inc., a CMA company, or CMA.*

CMAJ headlines:

- Teenaged girls did not engage in riskier sexual behaviour after HPV vaccination introduced in schools**
- If cannabis use increases after legalization, government must alter the act – editorial**

### **Teenaged girls did not engage in riskier sexual behaviour after HPV vaccination introduced in schools**

*Visual abstract: <https://bit.ly/2ydTc8W>*

Despite fears to the contrary, sexual behaviours of adolescent girls stayed the same or became safer after publicly funded school-based HPV vaccinations were introduced in British Columbia (BC), according to new research published in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

Some groups have been concerned that HPV vaccination could encourage early sexual activity, unprotected sex and other risky sexual behaviours.

“Concerns that the HPV vaccine could lead to increasingly risky sexual behaviours originate from the perception that by participating in an intervention that reduces risk, one may engage in higher-risk behaviours,” explains Dr. Gina Ogilvie, School of Population and Public Health, the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, with coauthors.

In 2008, BC introduced a publicly funded routine HPV vaccination program in schools for girls in grades 6 and 9. After 2011, the program was available only for girls in grade 6.

Researchers looked at data from the BC Adolescent Health Survey, a comprehensive survey of students in grades 7 to 12 conducted about every five years. A total of 302,626 self-identified heterosexual girls were included from the 2003, 2008 and 2013 surveys. The percentage of girls who reported ever having sex decreased from 21.3% in 2003 to 20.6 % in 2008 and to 18.3% in 2013. As well, the proportion of girls having intercourse before age 14 declined between 2008 and 2013 and the use of condoms increased over time, from 65.6% in 2003 to 68.9% in 2013.

“Our analysis of data from the BC Adolescent Health Survey suggests that the implementation of a school-based program for HPV vaccination was not associated with an increase in risky sexual behaviours among adolescent girls at the population level,” write the authors.

They suggest that these findings should allay fears about increased and riskier sexual behaviours in teenaged girls because of a perceived reduced risk of contracting HPV after vaccination.

The study was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the CIHR Foundation.

“*Population-level adolescent sexual behaviours in adolescent girls before and after introduction of the human papillomavirus vaccine (2003–2013)*” is published October 15, 2018.

***MEDIA NOTE: Please use the following public links after the embargo lift:***

***Research:*** <http://www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.180628>

*Visual abstract:* [www.cmaj.ca/lookup/suppl/doi:10.1053/cmaj.180628/-/DC1](http://www.cmaj.ca/lookup/suppl/doi:10.1053/cmaj.180628/-/DC1)

**Media contact:** Heather Amos, Communications Officer, BC Centre for Disease Control, Vancouver, BC, tel: 604-707-2412, [heather.amos@phsa.ca](mailto:heather.amos@phsa.ca)

## **If cannabis use increases after legalization, government must alter the act**

*Editorial*

If cannabis use increases after legalization of recreational cannabis on October 17, the Government of Canada should commit to changing the act to prevent negative health effects, argues an editorial in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

“Given the known and unknown health hazards of cannabis, any increase in use of recreational cannabis after legalization, whether by adults or youth, should be viewed as a failure of this legislation,” writes Dr. Diane Kelsall, Editor-in-Chief (Interim), *CMAJ*.

Health Canada reports that cannabis, a drug that is currently illegal for recreational purposes, will create issues in about one in three adult users and addiction in almost one in 10, with youth being more susceptible to negative effects.

“The decision by the federal government to legalize cannabis sends a clear message to Canadians that its use is acceptable,” Dr. Kelsall writes.

For Bill C-45 to fulfill its aim to ensure public health under legalization, the government must be vigilant in tracking cannabis usage, providing adequate funding to do this in all jurisdictions as well as to conduct research into harms.

“Finally, if the use of cannabis increases, the federal government should have the courage to admit the legislation is flawed and amend the act. Canadians — and the world — will be watching,” the editorial concludes.

A related research article looking at the **effects of smoked cannabis on driving in young people** aged 18 to 24 years is published in *CMAJ Open* [www.cmajopen.ca](http://www.cmajopen.ca) on October 15.

**CMAJ Open:** “Cannabis use and driving-related performance in young recreational users: a within-subject randomized clinical trial”

**CMAJ Cannabis collection:** [www.cmaj.ca/medical\\_marijuana](http://www.cmaj.ca/medical_marijuana)

***MEDIA NOTE: Please use the following public links after the embargo lift:***

***Editorial:*** <http://www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.181287>

**General media contact:** Kim Barnhardt, Communications, CMAJ,  
[kim.barnhardt@cmaj.ca](mailto:kim.barnhardt@cmaj.ca)  
[@CMAJ](#)

© 2018 Joule Inc. or its licensors | 1031 Bank St., Ottawa, ON, K1S 3W7, 866-971-9171

To modify or cancel your subscription to these email alerts, email

[kim.barnhardt@cmaj.ca](mailto:kim.barnhardt@cmaj.ca)