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Illinois Church Action on Alcohol & Addiction Problems

Marijuana Alert - April 3, 2023



Legal cannabis markets linked to increased motor vehicle deaths

New study looks at death rates in seven states with recreational cannabis dispensaries

Newswise — A new study from the University of Illinois Chicago used death certificate data to compare mortality rates in states that legalized recreational cannabis dispensaries with states that only provided access to medical cannabis.

The UIC researchers found that there was a substantial increase in crash fatalities in four of the seven states used in the study with legalized recreational markets and that, on average, recreational markets were associated with a 10% increase in motor vehicle accident deaths.

“To see a 10% increase in motor vehicle accident deaths associated with recreational markets is concerning. Previous studies have found cannabis impairs driving ability and that driving while high is fairly common among regular cannabis users,” said Marinello, a postdoctoral research associate with the division of health policy and administration at the UIC School of Public Health.

For each cause of death, the researchers compared deaths in states with legal markets with those in states with comprehensive medical cannabis programs and similar trends in death rates prior to implementing markets.

The data revealed significant increases in crash fatalities in Colorado (16%), Oregon (22%), Alaska (20%), and California (14%).

“The impact of recreational cannabis markets on motor vehicle accident, suicide, and opioid overdose fatalities” is published in the journal Social Science & Medicine. [READ](#)

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