

# The Prevalence and Perception of Marijuana Use among Full-time Slovak University Students in Relation to Their Socio-economic Determinants



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**BACKGROUND:** The use of drugs is considered one of the serious social problems. **OBJECTIVES:** The aim of this paper is to measure the level and type of influence of selected socio-economic variables on the use of marijuana and opinions about related risks among Slovak university students.

**METHODS:** The data set was obtained on the basis of a questionnaire survey. The data collection took place between 12/2015 and 02/2016. Approximately 90% of the questionnaires were completed in electronic form. The data was analysed using contingency tables. **SAMPLE:** 748 full-time students at Slovak universities (290 males and 458 females). **RESULTS:** The gender of the student was found to be the relatively strongest determinant of those that were studied. The female students showed a significantly lower prevalence of marijuana use and were also less likely to underestimate the risks of its use in comparison to the male

students. The second most important determinant was the type of faculty; medicine-related faculties showed different results in comparison with other faculties. Students at these faculties showed a significantly lower prevalence of marijuana use and were more prudent regarding the risks posed by its use. The effect of the length of study on the students' views on the occasional and regular use of marijuana ranked third in terms of its significance. Students in master's study programmes had a greater awareness of the risks of marijuana use in comparison with bachelor's-level students. The impact of other socio-economic variables was relatively lower or negligible. **CONCLUSIONS:** The protective factors of risk of marijuana use and views of the risks are associated with female gender, medicine-related study programmes, studies at master's level, and a complete family background.

**KEY WORDS:** MARIJUANA USE – ATTITUDES – UNIVERSITY STUDENTS – SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS – SLOVAKIA

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