Introduction

Background
- Among college students, marijuana is the most commonly used illicit substance (Pearson, Liese, Dvorak, 2016).
- Most students in college will experience their first encounter with substance abuse and mental health problems (Pedrelli et al., 2014).
- To cope with daily stresses, mental health and substance abuse issues many college students will substitute or co-use marijuana (Haardörfer et al., 2016).
- Studies suggest motives held to use marijuana may be due to perceiving its use as socially acceptable (Evans-Polze, Lanza, Maggs, 2015).
- Relative to other licit and illicit substance use, systematic study of marijuana use is emerging and growing in salience (Hasin, 2017).
- However, there are a lack of studies examining the correlates of Hispanic college student marijuana use.

Aim
- The aim of this study is to assess marijuana use frequency and potential demographic and psychosocial correlates in Hispanic college students.

Methods

Participants
- Participants were recruited through psychology courses; 396 participants completed an online consent process and survey (71% female; 87% Hispanic; Age (M = 20.16, SD = 3.87)).

Measures
- Sociodemographics: This questionnaire collected typical sociodemographic information (e.g. age, sex, education).
- Current Smoking: This is a dichotomous smoking variable that distinguished between current non-smokers and current smokers.
- Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use Frequency: Assessed the age of first use, past month, past year, and lifetime use of various drugs (e.g., cheese, marijuana, LSD).

Marijuana Decisional Balance Scale (MDB: Elliott et al., 2011): The scale includes 8 pros and 16 cons, respondents rated the items regarding whether the items were likely to influence the respondent's decision to use marijuana, using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important). Internal consistency of the MDB pros and cons subscales were $\alpha = 0.954$ and $0.965$ respectively.

Comprehensive Marijuana Motives Questionnaire (CMMQ: Lee, Neighbors, Hendershot, Grossbard, 2009): This scale consists of 36 items representing 12 motives for using: marijuana enjoyment, conformity, coping, experimentation, boredom, alcohol use, celebration, altered perceptions, social anxiety, relative low risk, sleep, and availability. Users utilized a scale of 1 (“almost never or never”) to 5 (“almost always or always”). Items within each subscale are summed and an average score computed. Subscale internal consistencies were adequate (all $\alpha > 0.925$).

Nicotine and Marijuana Interaction Expectancy (NAMIE: Ramo, Lu, & Prashaska, 2011): Participants rated statements about tobacco and marijuana use on a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Scales were: 1) the effects of marijuana use on smoking; 2) the effects of smoking on marijuana use; and 3) smoking cigarettes to cope with urges to use marijuana. Scale scores were computed as the mean of the item ratings that make up the component, therefore having a range from 1 to 5. Subscale internal consistencies were adequate (all $\alpha > 0.930$).

Use rates found in the present study seem somewhat lower than use rates found in previous studies with college students (Lee et al., 2009). On the MDB, only pros of marijuana use were inversely related to past month frequency; clearly this finding is in contrast to hypotheses and warrants further exploration (Elliott, Carey, 2013). As in previous studies, some marijuana motives were associated with both past month and past year use; however, significant motives demonstrate different patterns from a previous study with college students (Lee et al., 2009) and one with adults seeking renewal for medical marijuana (Bohnet et al., 2018). Here, perhaps most unique is the finding that social anxiety motives have a positive relationship with past month use and an inverse one with past year use. It may be those who have used more frequently in the past month have done so with the “acute” motive of reducing social anxiety, whereas those who have used more frequently in the past year identify other stronger motives (such as seeing use as relatively low risk or to cope more generally) or have transitioned to using outside of social situations. The dual use of nicotine and marijuana expectations suggest that greater frequency users in the past month and past year indicate tobacco use increases marijuana use urges, yet greater use does not suggest using nicotine to cope with marijuana urges, perhaps as these participants are actually using marijuana more frequently than previously diminishing its use through tobacco.

Limitations and Strengths
- This study was cross sectional and correlational, limiting an ability to assess the correlates of use in a temporal fashion. Given the ethnocultural make-up of the study, its generalizability to all college students and/or young adults needs to be explored in future studies. The sample represents a strength however, in that findings provide insight into marijuana use and correlates in a college student sample comprised of primarily of Hispanics.

Future Directions
- Findings may contribute to improving marijuana prevention and cessation interventions for Hispanic college students, suggesting focus on motives, coping styles, and social context of use. Future directions include assessing these relationships prospectively and potentially in real time, as well as the efficacy of marijuana use prevention and intervention strategies tailored toward stress and anxiety reduction.

Discussion

Results

Linear regressions assessed correlates of past month and past year marijuana use. Both the past month ($F(21, 156) = 2.86, p < .001, R^2 = 0.28$) and past year ($F(21, 153) = 4.60, p < .001, R^2 = 0.39$) marijuana frequency models were statistically significant. See Tables 2 and 3 for statistically significant correlates.

References

Lee, S. Y., & Hasin, D. H. (2015). Smoking to cope with marijuana urges, perhaps as these participants are actually using marijuana more frequently than previously diminishing its use through tobacco.