

The world map of cannabis



► Study demonstrates the extraordinary scale of the drug's global popularity

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IT'S 40 years since cannabis unleashed the "flower power" revolution of the 1960s, encouraging a generation in Europe and the US to "make love not war". Young people at the time hoped their legacy would be world peace. Instead, it has turned out to be a world of fuzzy dope-heads.

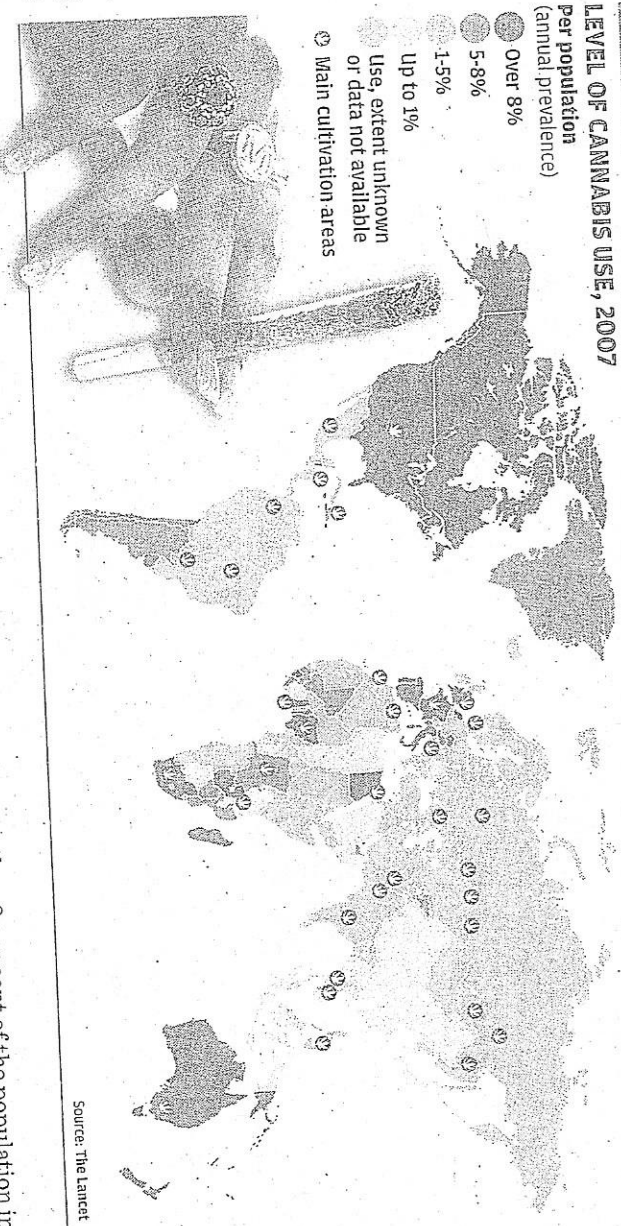
In the intervening decades, the drug whose intoxicating effects have been known for 4,000 years has been increasingly adopted by adolescents and young adults across the globe.

Today, an estimated one in 25 adults of working age – 166 million people around the world – has used cannabis to get high, either in ignorance or defiance of its damaging effects on health. Now, the extraordinary popularity of the drug is posing a significant public health challenge, doctors say.

Writing in *The Lancet*, Wayne Hall of the University of Queensland and Louis Degenhardt of the University of New South Wales, Australia, say cannabis slows reaction times and increases the risk of accidents, causes bronchitis, interferes with learning, memory and cognition and, most seriously, may

LEVEL OF CANNABIS USE, 2007
(annual prevalence)

- Over 8%
- 5-8%
- 1-5%
- Up to 1%
- Use, extent unknown or data not available
- Main cultivation areas



Source: The Lancet

double the risk of schizophrenia. Yet these effects have failed to dent its popularity.

"Since cannabis use was first reported over 40 years ago by US college students, its recreational or non-medical use has spread globally, first to high-

income countries, and recently to low-income and middle-income countries," they say.

Citing figures from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime for 2006, they say cannabis use is highest in the US, Australia and New Zealand (where more

than 8 per cent of the population indulge), followed by Europe. But because Asia and Africa have bigger populations, they also have the highest proportion of the world's cannabis users, accounting for almost a third (31 per cent) and a quarter (25 per cent) respectively.

Use of cannabis among young people rose strongly during the 1960s and 1970s, peaking in the US in 1979. There was then a long decline until it increased again in the 1990s, before levelling off once more since 2000. In Britain, Australia and New Zealand, cannabis use has been falling for several years, but it is thought to be rising in Latin America and several countries in Africa.

The typical user smokes their first joint in their mid-teens, with use peaking in the mid-20s. The habit then declines steeply as young people move into jobs and discover they have to get up in the morning. Marriage and babies accelerate the decline. About one in 10 of those who ever smoke a joint become regular daily users, with 20 to 30 per cent using the drug weekly. Regular users are also more likely to use other illicit drugs, including heroin and cocaine, lending support to the theory that "soft" drugs act as a "gateway" to hard drugs. But the authors admit this supposed link "remains a subject of considerable debate".

However, they add that the ill effects of cannabis are modest when compared with the damage done by alcohol, tobacco and other illicit drugs. In Australia, it accounted for just 0.2 per cent of the total burden of disease.

Table 2.6. Globalization: Growth in Volume of World Trade and GDP, 1500–2003 (annual average compound growth rates)

	World Trade	World GDP	col.1/2
1500–1820	0.96	0.32	3.0
1820–70	4.18	0.94	4.4
1870–1913	3.40	2.12	1.6
1913–50	0.90	1.82	0.5
1950–73	7.88	4.90	1.6
1973–2003	5.38	3.17	1.7
1820–2003	3.97	2.25	1.8

Notes and Sources: World trade volume 1500–1820 derived from growth in tonnage of the world merchant fleet (Maddison 2001: 95) with a 50 per cent upward adjustment for technical improvements which augmented effective carrying capacity; 1820–70 from Maddison (1982: 254); 1870–1990 from Maddison (2001: 362), updated to 2003 from IMF *International Financial Statistics*. World GDP from www.ggd.net/Maddison. See O'Rourke and Williamson (2002), for a similar estimate of the growth in intercontinental trade volume for 1500–1800, obtained by a totally different approach.

Table 3–2a. Growth in Volume of Merchandise Exports, World and Major Regions, 1870–1998
(annual average compound growth rates)

	1870–1913	1913–50	1950–73	1973–98
World	3.24	-0.14	8.38	4.79
Europe	4.71	2.27	6.26	5.92
Latin America	3.37	1.43	9.81	2.52
Asia	3.29	2.29	4.28	6.03
Africa	2.79	1.64	9.97	5.95
Eastern Europe & former USSR	4.37	1.90	5.34	1.87
North America	3.40	0.90	7.88	5.07

Table 3–2b. Merchandise Exports as Per Cent of GDP in 1990 Prices, World and Major Regions, 1870–1998

	1870	1913	1950	1973	1998
World	8.8	14.1	8.7	18.7	35.8
Europe	3.3	4.7	3.8	6.3	12.7
Latin America	1.6	2.5	2.1	6.2	13.2
Asia	9.7	9.0	6.0	4.7	9.7
Africa	1.7	3.4	4.2	9.6	12.6
Eastern Europe & former USSR	5.8	20.0	15.1	18.4	14.8
North America	4.6	7.9	5.5	10.5	17.2

Table 3–2c. Regional Percentage Shares of World Exports, 1870–1998

	1870	1913	1950	1973	1998
World	64.4	60.2	41.1	45.8	42.8
Europe	7.5	12.9	21.3	15.0	18.4
Latin America	4.2	4.1	5.0	7.5	4.1
Asia	5.4	5.1	8.5	3.9	4.9
Africa	13.9	10.8	14.1	22.0	27.1
Eastern Europe & former USSR	4.6	6.9	10.0	5.8	2.7
North America	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Tables 3–2a and 3–2c are derived from Table F–3. In Table 3–2b, exports in 1990 US dollars from Table F–3 are divided by GDP in 1990 international dollars.

Table 2-13. Commodity Composition of Brazilian Exports, 1821-1951
(per cent of total)

	<i>Cotton</i>	<i>Sugar</i>	<i>Coffee</i>	<i>Rubber</i>	<i>Cocoa</i>
1821-3	25.8	23.1	18.7	0.0	n.a.
1871-3	16.6	12.3	50.2	0.0	n.a.
1901-3	2.6	2.4	55.7	22.5	2.5
1927-9	2.0	0.5	71.1	2.0	3.8
1949-51	10.0	0.3	60.5	0.2	4.8

Source: 1821-73 from Leff (1982), Vol.II, p. 9. 1901-51 from *O Brasil em Numeros*.

Table 2-4. Sugar Production by Area of Origin, 1456-1894
(metric tons)

	<i>Cyprus</i>	<i>Madeira</i>	<i>São Tomé</i>	<i>Brazil</i>	<i>British Caribbean</i>	<i>French Caribbean</i>	<i>Other Caribbean</i>	<i>Rest of World</i>
1456	800	80						
1500	375	2 500						
1580		500	2 200 ^a	2 300				
1700				20 000	22 000	10 000	5 000	
1760				28 000	71 000	81 000	20 000	
1787				19 000	106 000	125 000	36 000	
1815				75 000	168 000	36 600	66 200	18 500
1894				275 000	260 200	79 400	1 119 000	6 523 600

a) 1550s.

Source: 1486-1787 from Blackburn (1997), pp. 109, 172, 403 and Schwartz (1985), p. 13; 1815-94 from Williams (1970), pp. 366, 377-80. The figure for rest of world includes 10 000 tons of beet sugar in 1815 and 4 725 000 tons in 1894. Sugar beet production started in Europe during the Napoleonic wars.

Table 3-21. World Production of Crude Oil and Natural Gas, 1950-99
(million metric tons)

<i>Country</i>	<i>1950</i>	<i>1973</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>1950</i>	<i>1973</i>	<i>1999</i>
Bahrain	1.5	3.4	2.2	Former USSR	37.9	429.1	370.2
Iran	32.3	293.2	176.2	Romania		14.3	6.6
Iraq	6.6	99.5	124.7	Other Eastern Europe		8.2	5.6
Kuwait	17.3	150.6	95.6	Total Eastern Europe		22.5	12.3
Oman		14.6	46.1	Argentina	3.4	21.9	43.0
Qatar	1.6	27.5	31.2	Brazil	—	8.3	57.4
Saudi Arabia	26.6	380.2	426.3	Colombia	4.7	9.8	41.8
Syria	—	5.5	29.2	Ecuador	0.3	10.6	20.7
United Arab Emirates	—	73.6	101.7	Mexico	10.4	27.2	163.4
Yemen	—	—	19.4	Peru	2.1	3.6	5.3
Total West Asia	85.9	1 054.1	1 052.7	Venezuela	80.0	178.4	161.7
China	n.a.	53.6	160.6	Other Latin America	n.a.	12.3	13.0
India	0.3	7.2	38.0	Total Latin America	n.a.	272.1	506.3
Indonesia	6.4	66.1	63.9	Algeria	—	51.1	58.5
Malaysia	n.a.	4.3	37.6	Angola		8.2	37.6
Other East Asia	n.a.	13.6	37.6	Congo		2.1	12.9
Total East Asia	n.a.	91.3	177.0	Egypt	2.6	8.5	41.5
Norway	—	1.6	149.3	Gabon		7.6	16.8
United Kingdom	0.2	0.5	139.2	Libya		106.2	65.0
Other West Europe	n.a.	18.3	31.7	Nigeria			99.5
Total Western Europe	n.a.	20.4	320.2	Other Africa	—	3.9	17.5
United States	266.7	513.3	359.6	Total Africa		289.0	349.3
Canada		94.1	114.1	World	523.0	2 858.9	3 449.5
Australia		19.2	24.6				
New Zealand		0.2	2.1				
Total Western Offshoots		626.8	500.4				

Table 2-23. Structure of British Commodity Trade by Origin and Destination, 1710-1996
(per cent of total current value)

	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Africa</i>	<i>North America</i>	<i>British West Indies</i>	<i>Other America</i>	<i>Australia & New Zealand</i>
Imports							
1710 ^a	63.6	6.9	0.4	7.3	21.7	0.1	0.0
1774	46.1	11.4	0.4	12.5	29.3	0.3	0.0
1820	26.8	24.6	0.5	14.6	26.0	7.5	0.0
1913	40.7 ^b	15.7	3.0	22.6	0.8 ^c	9.6	7.6
1950	27.8 ^b	17.2	11.0	15.9	5.1 ^c	8.6	14.4
1996	61.7	18.8	2.2	14.1	0.3 ^c	1.7	1.2
Exports and Re-exports							
1710 ^a	87.6	2.1	1.2	5.1	3.4	0.6	0.0
1774	58.5	3.9	6.0	21.5	10.0	0.1	0.0
1820	61.8	7.1	1.1	11.7	9.0	9.3	0.0
1913	37.4 ^b	22.7	6.4	13.5	1.0 ^c	8.7	10.3
1950	28.8 ^b	18.9	13.2	14.4	1.7 ^c	7.2	15.8
1996	63.3	16.8	3.0	13.3	0.3 ^c	1.5	1.8

a) England and Wales; b) includes North Africa; c) includes all Caribbean.

Source: Mitchell and Deane (1962), pp. 309-11 (for 1710-1820); pp. 317-23 (for 1913). Mitchell and Jones (1971) pp. 136-9 (for 1950). *UN Yearbook of International Trade Statistics* (1996), p. 1065 for 1996. From Mitchell and Deane (1962), pp. 2679-84, it appears that reexports were 58 per cent of domestic exports (i.e. 37 per cent of total exports) in the 1720s and 1770s. This compares with 53 per cent and 220 per cent in the Netherlands for these two periods (see Table 2-19 above). In 1913, British reexports were 20.8 per cent of domestic exports, and in 1950, 3.9 per cent. In 1710, woollen and worsted yarn and manufactures were 78 per cent of domestic exports; in 1774, 49 per cent; in 1820, 12 per cent; and in 1913, 6 per cent. Cotton yarn and manufactures were 2 per cent of domestic exports in 1774; 62 per cent in 1820; 24 per cent in 1913; and 11 per cent in 1938.