Abstract

The topic of legalizing marijuana for recreational use is becoming increasingly relevant over time, not only worldwide but also in the Czech Republic. This trend began with the legalization of recreational marijuana in the United States, specifically in the states of Colorado and Washington in 2012. Subsequently in 2013 Uruguay became the first country to legalize marijuana throughout its entire territory. Since then, other U.S. states and countries such as Canada and Malta have joined the legalization movement. The most interesting development from the perspective of the Czech Republic is in Germany, where the legalization of cultivation and possession of marijuana for recreational use is planned from the year 2024. This, coupled with the growing support from experts and politicians advocating for marijuana legalization in the Czech Republic, could lead to the adoption of similar legislation. The legalization of marijuana raises a series of questions that need to be addressed before such a step is taken. Among the most common concerns associated with marijuana legalization are its impact on mental health and the potential increase in marijuana use among adolescents due to easier access to the drug. To answer these questions, it is essential to compare existing models of marijuana legalization worldwide, drawing information that can aid in creating similar legislation in the Czech Republic. The goal is to prevent or at least mitigate possible negative consequences stemming from marijuana legalization. In this study, I compare data from studies and questionnaire surveys tracking the prevalence of marijuana use, the prevalence of mental disorders, and marijuana legalization models in Canada and U.S. states during the period before and after the introduction of legalization. The results of this comparison can shed light on whether some of the selected countries have successfully prevented negative impacts of marijuana legalization for recreational use and whether concerns about these negative impacts are justified.