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THC amounts found in cannabis confiscated by law enforcement have been increasing

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The National Institute on Drug Abuse contracts the National Center for Natural Products Research at the University of Mississippi to analyze cannabis confiscated by local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. Resulting research has found that the amount of the psychoactive cannabinoid tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, in seized cannabis has increased over time. Presence of the cannabinoid cannabidiol, or CBD, rose in 2019.

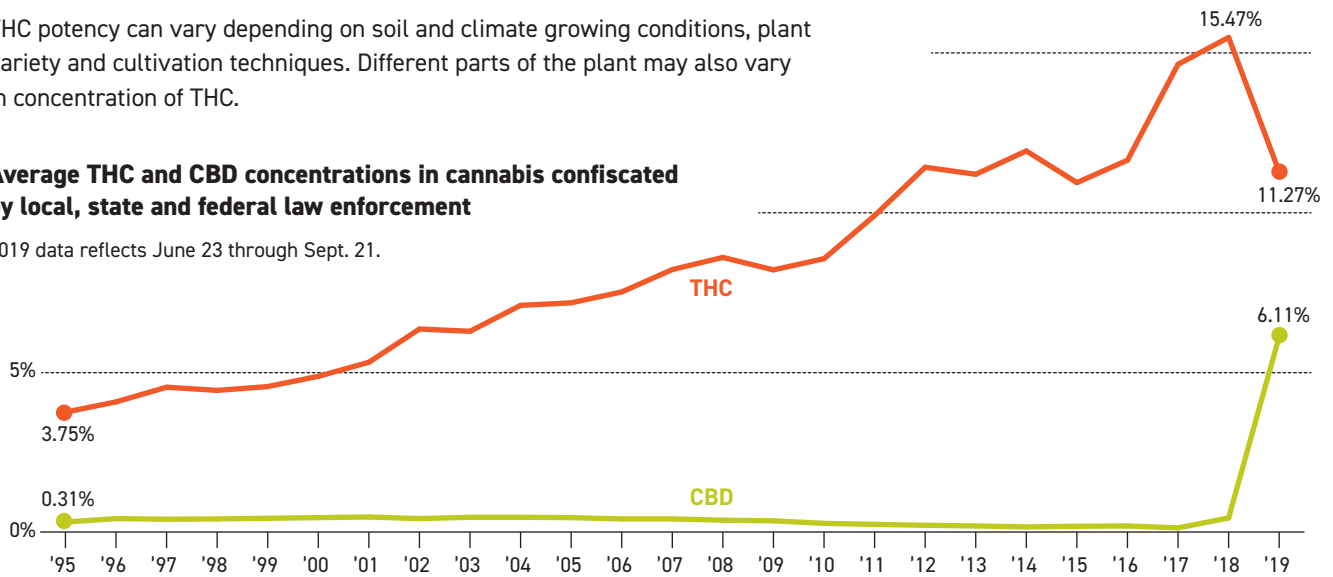
According to Dr. Mahmoud A. ElSohly, pharmaceuticals and research professor with the University of Mississippi and director of the NIDA Marijuana Project, defining THC concentrations as high potency is subjective but a THC level of 5 percent was considered high potency in the 1990s. THC concentrations can now exceed 20 percent.

Although more research is required, higher levels of THC may raise the risk of a harmful reaction in new users and may also increase the risk of addiction, according to NIDA.

THC potency can vary depending on soil and climate growing conditions, plant variety and cultivation techniques. Different parts of the plant may also vary in concentration of THC.

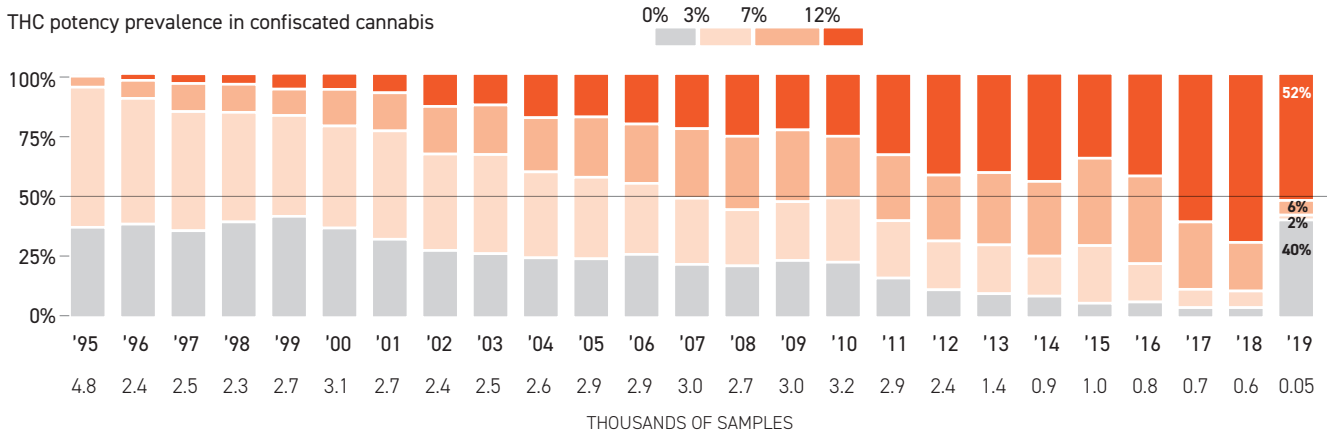
Average THC and CBD concentrations in cannabis confiscated by local, state and federal law enforcement

2019 data reflects June 23 through Sept. 21.



High-THC cannabis represents increasing proportions of the cannabis confiscated by law enforcement

THC potency prevalence in confiscated cannabis



Note: Data are by year in which cannabis was seized by law enforcement. Samples that were wet or moldy, seeds or stems or of insufficient weight were not analyzed but included in total sample counts.

Source: Potency Monitoring Program Quarterly Report #141 performed by the National Center for Natural Products Research for the National Institute on Drug Abuse