RISK PERCEPTIONS ON MEDICAL MARIJUANA:
A GLIMPSE OF MALAYSIAN ADULTS

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INTRODUCTION

Marijuana, derived from the Cannabis sativa plant, is a popular substance with various slang names and is consumed through different methods and is able to give effects. Measuring perceptions of the potential risks associated with marijuana use is a useful method to predict future usage, as it has proven to be a reliable predictor in the past.

Decriminalisation, the removal of criminal sanctions while maintaining legal restrictions, is considered an alternative approach to drug-related issues and many countries have adopted decriminalisation strategies tailored to their contexts. The decriminalisation of medical marijuana involves granting legal access to patients based on evidence. However, the longterm effects of medical marijuana use among vulnerable populations require further investigation.

OBJECTIVE

To identity the perception of health risk related to medical marijuana use

METHODOLOGY

Study Design:
Cross-sectional study using an online survey

Study Population:
Malaysian who are 18 years and older, including users and nonusers of marijuana

Sample Size:
2,047 people

Sampling Technique:
Snowball sampling technique

Inclusion Criteria:
Aged 18 and above, have access to the internet, and are able to understand Malay or English language

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA *(*only stated the highest)*

GENDER
68.0% Male (1,391)
32.0% Female (656)

AGE
38.7% 35-44 years old

RACE
81.4% Malay (1,666)
5.5% Indian (113)
1.5% Chinese (117)

EDUCATION LEVEL:
31.8% Degree (650)

OCCUPATION:
49.6% Government Servant(1,016)
25.6% Private Company(524)

LIVING AREA:
31.8% Urban (584)
27.7% Rural (224)

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA:
95.4% Yes (1,952)
4.6% No (95)

RESULTS

RISK PERCEPTIONS ON MEDICAL MARIJUANA

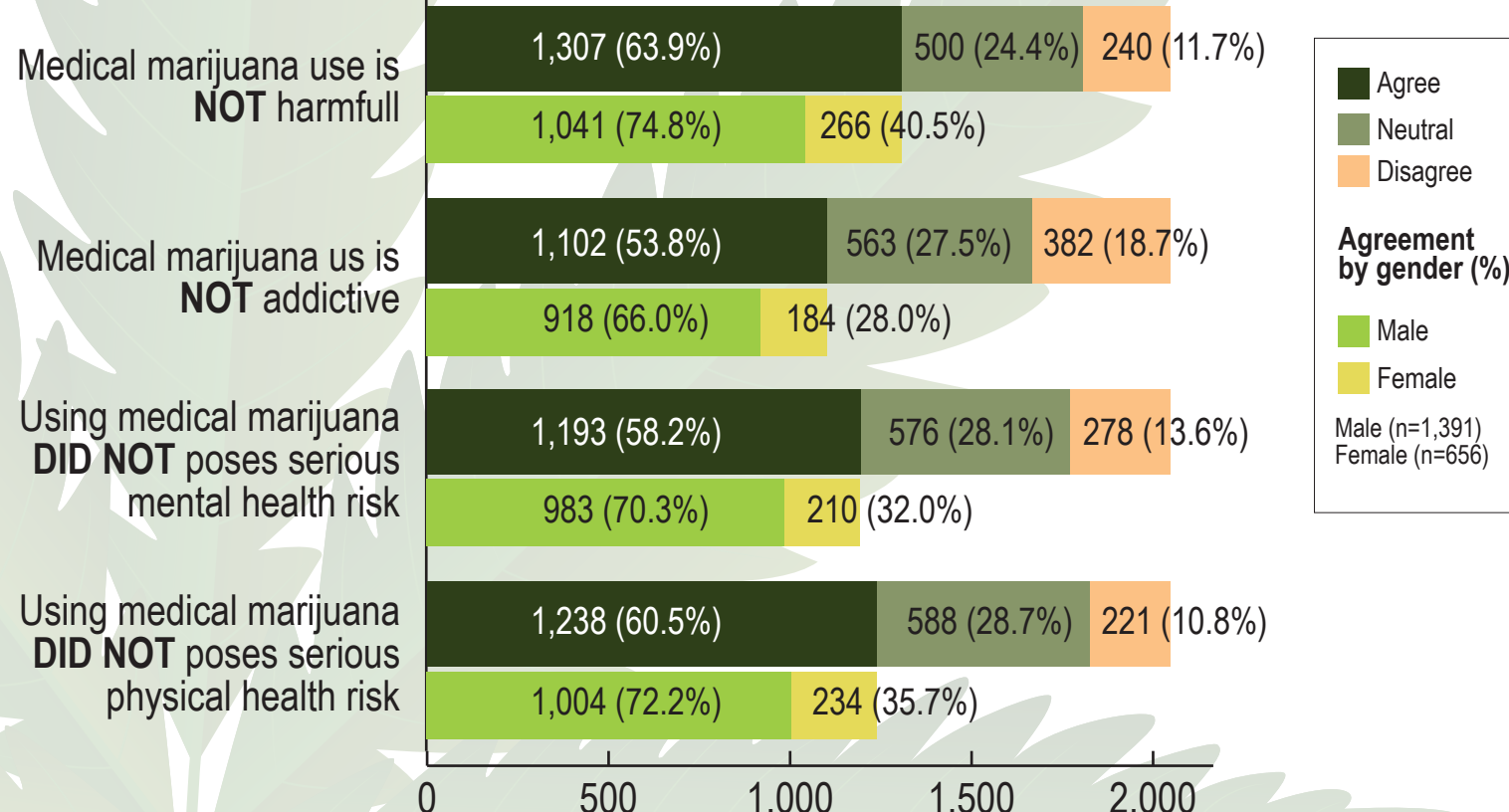Looks at **4 conditions** which are: (harmful, addictive, mental health risk, and physical health risk)

Male respondents were consistently more likely than female respondents to believe that medical marijuana use is safe.

RISK PERCEPTIONS ON MEDICAL MARIJUANA USE BY PEOPLE AGED 18 AND ABOVE
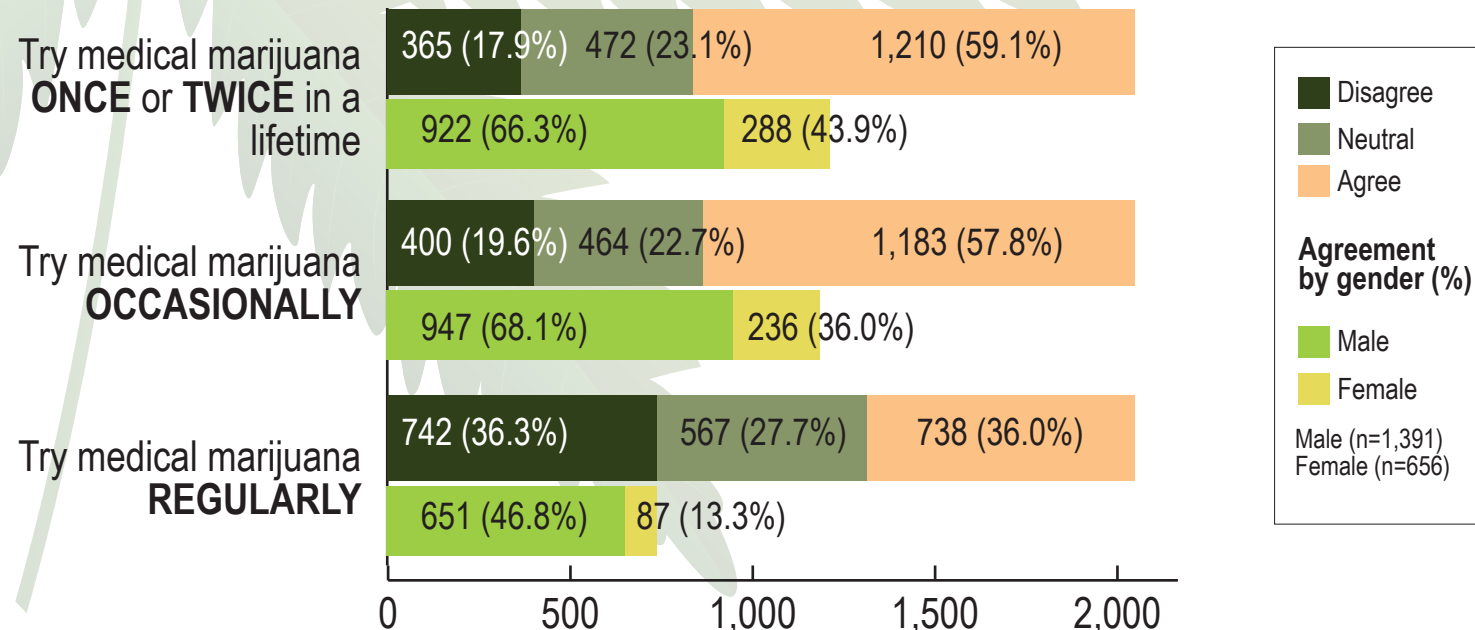
Based on the findings, the level of agreement among females shows a decrease as the frequency of medical marijuana use increases

Male respondents still had a more favourable attitude toward medical marijuana usage than females

Risk perceptions on Medical Marijuana

Medical marijuana use is **NOT** harmfull
- 1,307 (63.9%) | 500 (24.4%) | 240 (11.7%)
- 1,041 (74.8%) | 266 (40.5%)

Medical marijuana us is **NOT** addictive
- 1,102 (53.8%) | 563 (27.5%) | 382 (18.7%)
- 918 (66.0%) | 184 (28.0%)

Using medical marijuana **DID NOT** poses serious mental health risk
- 1,193 (58.2%) | 576 (28.1%) | 278 (13.6%)
- 983 (70.3%) | 210 (32.0%)

Using medical marijuana **DID NOT** poses serious physical health risk
- 1,238 (60.5%) | 588 (28.7%) | 221 (10.8%)
- 1,004 (72.2%) | 234 (35.7%)

Legend:
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Agreement by gender (%): Male / Female
- Male (n=1,391) / Female (n=656)

Approved of people (who are 18 or older) doing each of the following

Try medical marijuana **ONCE** or **TWICE** in a lifetime
- 365 (17.9%) | 472 (23.1%) | 1,210 (59.1%)
- 922 (66.3%) | 288 (43.9%)

Try medical marijuana **OCCASIONALLY**
- 400 (19.6%) | 464 (22.7%) | 1,183 (57.8%)
- 947 (68.1%) | 236 (36.0%)

Try medical marijuana **REGULARLY**
- 742 (36.3%) | 567 (27.7%) | 738 (36.0%)
- 651 (46.8%) | 87 (13.3%)

Legend:
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Agreement by gender (%): Male / Female
- Male (n=1,391) / Female (n=656)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the risk perceptions and attitudes of the respondents towards medic al marijuana and decriminalization. However, it is essential to consider the distinct contexts of medical and recreational marijuana use and to base any future policy decisions on comprehensive scientific evidence and expert recommendations. Further research, including focus group discussions, can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of public attitudes and inform future policies related to medical marijuana and decriminalization.

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