



**EARLY LIFE &
PRENATAL HEALTH IN
NEURODEVELOPMENT**

How Pregnant Women Assess Their Cannabis Use Since Legalization Through the Lens of Intersectionality: Preliminary Results

Alunni-Menichini K., Bertrand K., Chabot R., Dominguez-Cancino K.A., Frossard de Saugy Y., Huynh C., L'Esperance N., Loslier J., Martinez Diaz P.A., Massamba V., Vasiliadis H.M., Nazif-Munoz J.I.



Main project, team, and objectives

Project

Entre tension et harmonie: conversations autour de la consommation de cannabis chez les femmes enceintes au Québec.

Team

PI: Jose Ignacio Nazif-Munoz

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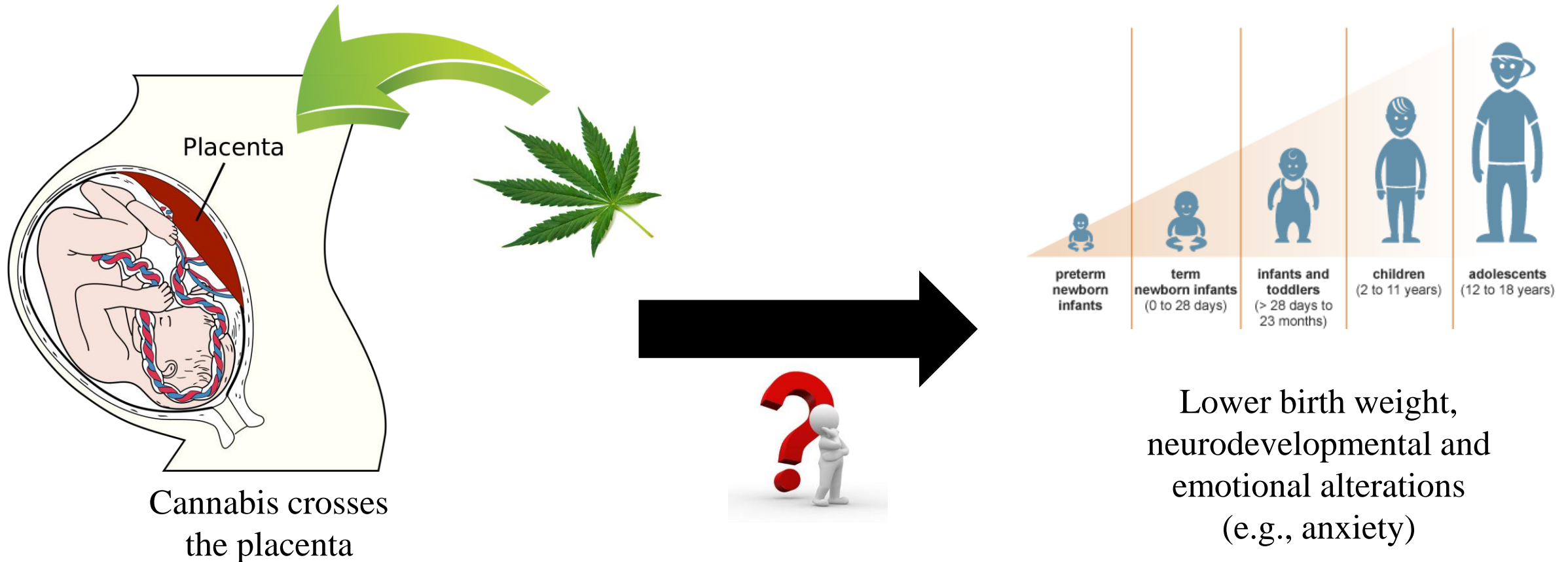
Objectives

Systematize how women, and their partners, assess cannabis use during pregnancy.

Systematize how health professionals respond and/or guide pregnant women with and without cannabis use disorder regarding cannabis use during pregnancy.

Assess the impact of the CA-2018 in the prevalence of diagnosed cannabis use disorder in pregnant women across Quebec regions.

Cannabis use and pregnancy



In 2018

Legalization of
cannabis
in Canada



Objectives

Better understand how cannabis use in pregnant women in Quebec has evolved with attention to :

- their individual and partners' behaviors,
- health system factors and
- cannabis policies



Better understand, from an intersectional perspective, how pregnant women assess their cannabis use.

Method

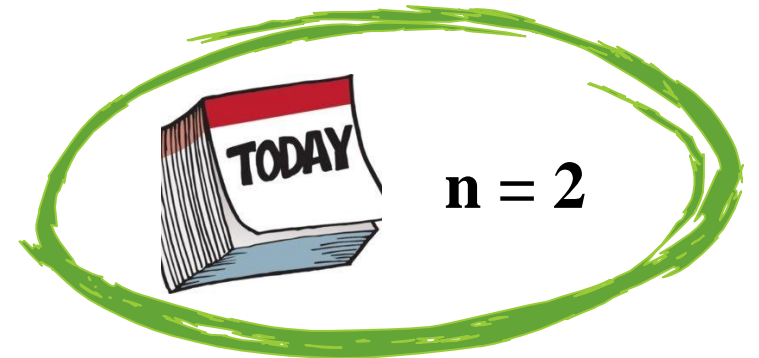
Mixed-Method

Qualitative design



Individual interviews

with pregnant women and new mothers (> 2 years)
and their partners

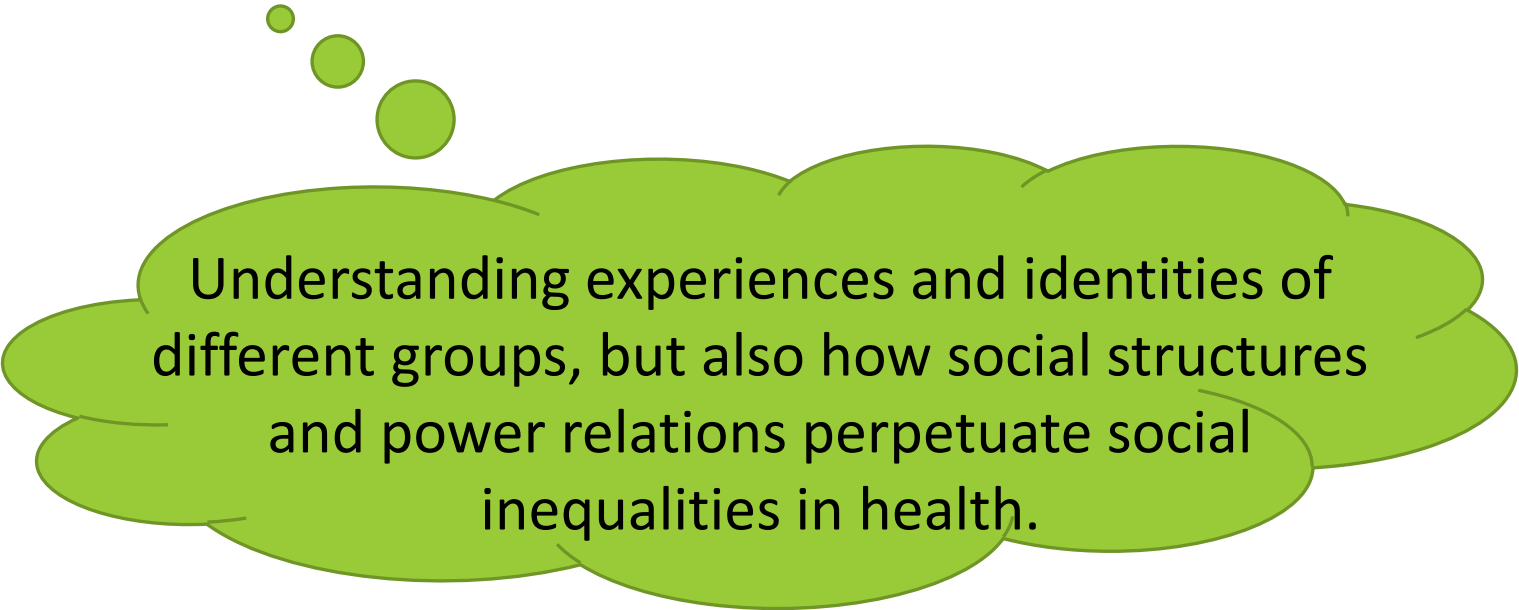


Analysis

Content analysis
through the
lens of intersectionality

Intersectionality

Try to understand people's lives as multi-dimensional and complex !



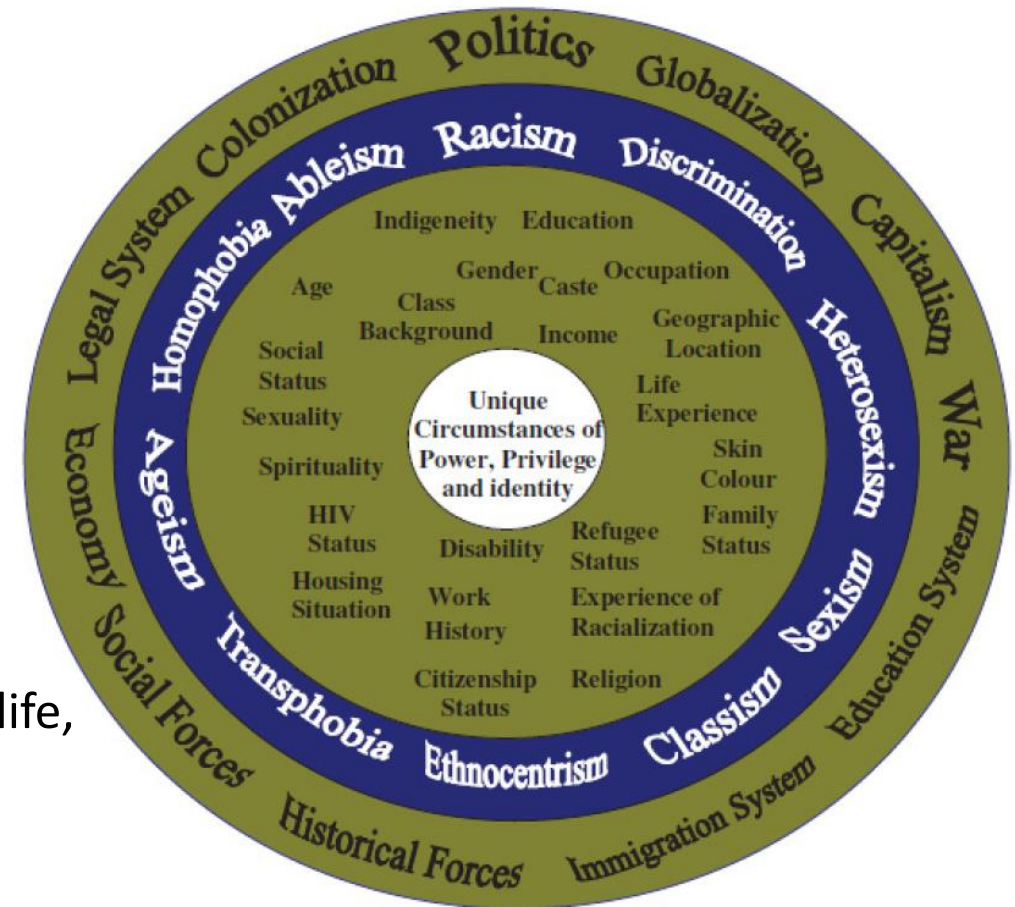
Understanding experiences and identities of different groups, but also how social structures and power relations perpetuate social inequalities in health.

Intersectionality

- **Individual aspects :**
 - Social locations (e.g., gender, age, education, income)
 - Personal history (e.g., traumas, autostigma)
- **Relational aspects** (e.g., violence vs support/help from partn
- **Systemic aspects** (e.g., public policies, medias)

= PRIVILEGES AND STIGMAS/OPPRESSIONS

that add up and multiply the inequities, the effects on the person's life, and influence their living conditions and choices



Preliminary results and analysis



Before pregnancy

Motives for using cannabis

1) Feel good

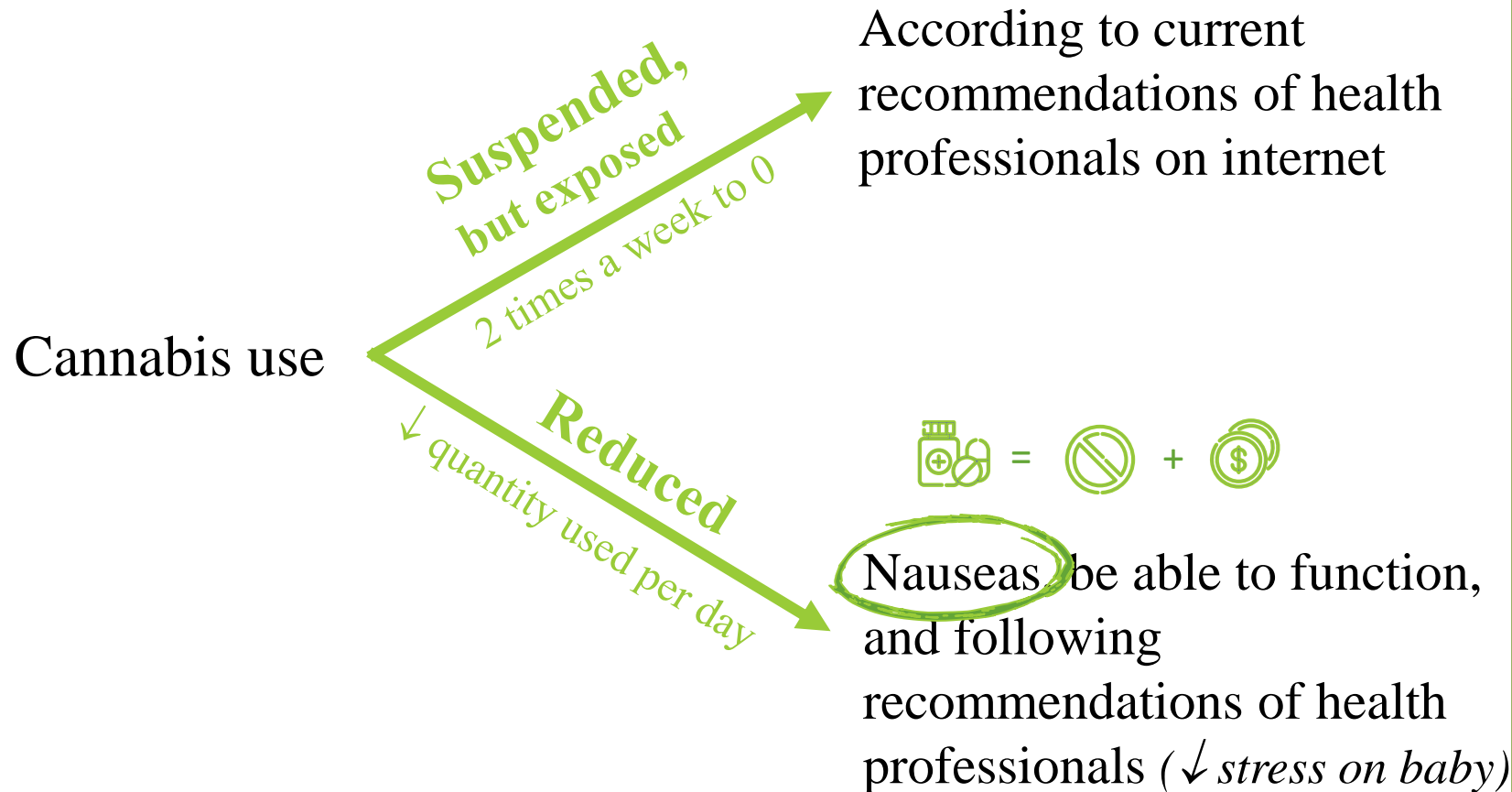


2) ↓ Anxiety

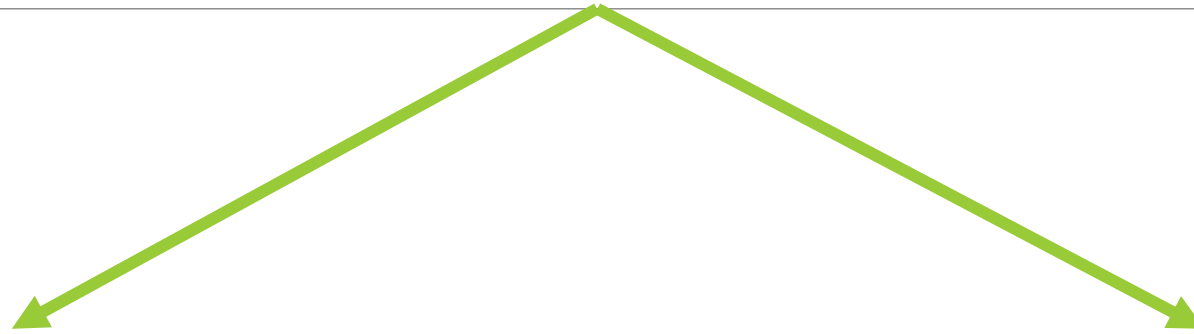


During pregnancy

Choices and why



Legalization impacts



It's easier to talk to a health care professional about cannabis use, but don't do it if it's not perceived as a problem.

No impact when it concerns women younger than 21 years

Preliminary discussion

- Participants made **desistance decisions**, a strategy to reduce the risk of their cannabis use on the fetus.
 - Pre-pregnancy use patterns, health status during pregnancy and abilities appear to influence their decision.
- **Privileges**, such as education and income, and better control over cannabis use appear to be a facilitator for suspending or stopping their use.

vs.

Inequalities in health and education, involvement with youth protection, early onset and frequent of use appear to reduce the likelihood of suspending or stopping their use.

Preliminary discussion

- **Medical use of cannabis during pregnancy?**
 - “People who experience nausea and vomiting during pregnancy are approximately twice as likely to use cannabis” (Greyson et al., 2021, p.97)
 - According to some sources, cannabis use is a good way to manage these symptoms, but also a reasonable alternative to other medications or substances that have serious damage on the fetus.



One of our participants also opted for a self-treatment decision for the perceived effectiveness and low cost of cannabis.

Preliminary discussion

- The lack of studies on the effects of cannabis during pregnancy is highlighted.



To make an informed decision ?

- In the case of heavier use, the recommendation to reduce rather than abruptly stop use appears to be preferred, as is the case for other substances (e.g., alcohol, opioids).



Benefits vs. risks ?

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References

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