

More people than ever hospitalised after using cannabis

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More than one in eight drug-related hospital admissions in Scotland are now caused by cannabis, scotching theories that the substance is harmless.

New statistics revealed there were 1689 people taken to hospital in 2017/18 after using the drug, either from overdosing or suffering psychological effects.

That's the equivalent of 32 people a week, and signals a seven-fold rise since figures were first recorded in the mid-1990s.

The number of cannabis-users admitted was not only the highest ever but, at 13.5 per cent of all drug-related admissions, also the largest proportion ever.

It compares to just 6.5 per cent when the records began in the mid-1990s, and is nearly the double the rate from when the SNP came to power, when the drug accounted for just 7.5 per cent of drug-related admissions.

Earlier this week, ISD Scotland figures showed the overall number of people rushed to hospital after using drugs was at a record high.

Across the country, there were 10,509 admissions, a four-fold increase from two decades ago.

Scottish Conservative public health spokeswoman Annie Wells said:

"This exposes claims that cannabis is a harmless drug as a nonsense.

"There is now evidence of dozens of hospital admissions every week as a direct result of people taking cannabis.

"These are individuals whose lives are being destroyed by a drug that too many people want to see normalised.

"Instead, we need to be getting tough on dealers and providing proper support to those who have developed problems with addiction.

"The SNP seem to want to make it easier for people in Scotland to take drugs, when most addicts themselves just want to stop altogether.

"Cannabis may not have quite the ruinous effect of Class A drugs like heroin, but there are now thousands of examples where Scots have been hospitalised after taking it.

"That tells me a new approach is required."