

# Effects of intervention duration and chat-based intervention in an online cannabis treatment program

<b>Submission date</b> 17/06/2014	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 27/06/2014	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 02/01/2020	<b>Condition category</b> Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Cannabis is a popular recreational drug used all over the world, only behind alcohol, caffeine and tobacco. It can be addictive and cause mental health problems and lung damage. The therapist-guided web-based programme Quit the Shit (QTS) offers free and anonymous support for people who want to stop using cannabis, or reduce their intake. Previous research has shown that the programme is effective at reducing peoples cannabis use and so we now want to study the program effects more closely. We are especially interested in the effects of two main features of the program its duration and the therapist-guided chat.

### Who can participate?

The study aims at German speaking cannabis users who want to cease or reduce their consumption and who are at least 18 years old, are not alcohol dependent, do not have a mental health problem, have not used other illicit drugs on more than 4 occasions in the last 30 days, are not suicidal and, finally, have not participated in the programme before.

### What does the study involve?

After registering with the study, all participants fill out the baseline questionnaire of the study. It is presented online on the website of the program (<https://www.quit-the-shit.net>). The eligibility criteria are checked in the baseline questionnaire. To begin the programme, all participants pick an appointment to start. When logging into their user account at the scheduled appointment, they are randomized to one of four study groups: a) 28 days program duration without therapist-guided chat, b) 50 days program duration without therapist-guided chat, c) 28 days program duration with at least one therapist-guided chat, d) 50 days program duration with at least one therapist-guided chat. All participants have access to an online cannabis use-diary and up to six different online exercises aiming to improve their coping skills. Every week, each participant receives a detailed feedback from a trained psychologist on their journal entries.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

All participants gain access to professional, free of charge and anonymous support to help them reduce their cannabis use. The support is provided by trained and experienced psychotherapists.

Thus we assume that participants of all four study groups will benefit by reducing their cannabis use and by increasing their drug-related coping strategies. We do not see any noteworthy risks in participating.

Where is the study run from?

The study is fully internet based. It runs on the website [www.quit-the-shit.net](http://www.quit-the-shit.net), owned by the German Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA).

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

August 2014 to February 2016

Who is funding the study?

German Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA), Germany

Who is the main contact?

Mr Benjamin Jonas,  
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## Contact information

### Type(s)

Scientific

### Contact name

Mr Benjamin Jonas

### Contact details

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## Additional identifiers

## Study information

### Scientific Title

Effects of intervention duration and chat-based intervention in an online cannabis treatment program ("Quit the Shit") - an online randomised controlled trial

### Acronym

QTS

### Study objectives

Both the duration of the program (50 days vs. 28 days) and the provision of at least one therapist-guided chat-session (yes vs. no) increase the effectiveness of a web-based intervention for cannabis users.

## **Ethics approval required**

Old ethics approval format

## **Ethics approval(s)**

Ethics committee of the Magdeburg Stendal University of Applied Sciences, 29/07/2013, ref. AZ 4973-35

## **Primary study design**

Interventional

## **Study design**

Randomised controlled trial

## **Study type(s)**

Treatment

## **Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Cannabis use disorder

## **Interventions**

Study participants are randomized to one of four groups

1. 28 days duration without therapist-guided chat
2. 50 days duration without therapist-guided chat
3. 28 days duration with at least one therapist-guided chat
4. 50 days duration with at least one therapist-guided chat

All participants have access to an online cannabis use-diary and up to six different online exercises aiming to improve their coping skills. Every week, each participant receives a detailed feedback from a trained psychologist on their journal entries.

## **Intervention Type**

Other

## **Phase**

Not Applicable

## **Primary outcome(s)**

1. Cannabis use days during the last 30 days
2. Cannabis use amount (grams) during the last 30 days

## **Key secondary outcome(s)**

1. Severity of Dependence Scale SDS
2. Cannabis Craving Scale CCS-7

## **Completion date**

15/11/2016

## **Eligibility**

### **Key inclusion criteria**

1. Minimum age 18 years
2. Currently no alcohol use disorder (score of less than 3 in the CAGE instrument), psychotic disorder or bipolar disorder
3. Currently no use of other illicit drugs on more than 4 days during the last 30 days
4. No previous participation at the program
5. No suicidal thoughts

**Participant type(s)**

Patient

**Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Adult

**Lower age limit**

18 Years

**Sex**

All

**Total final enrolment**

534

**Key exclusion criteria**

Does not meet inclusion criteria

**Date of first enrolment**

18/08/2014

**Date of final enrolment**

27/02/2016

**Locations****Countries of recruitment**

Germany

**Study participating centre**

**Delphi GmbH**

Berlin

Germany

14057

**Sponsor information**

## Organisation

Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) (Germany)

## ROR

<https://ror.org/054c9y537>

## Funder(s)

### Funder type

Government

### Funder Name

Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) (Germany)

### Alternative Name(s)

Federal Centre for Health Education, BZgA

### Funding Body Type

Government organisation

### Funding Body Subtype

National government

### Location

Germany

## Results and Publications

### Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

#### IPD sharing plan summary

Not provided at time of registration

#### Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Results article</a>	results	08/05/2018		Yes	No
<a href="#">Other publications</a>	analysis	26/07/2019	02/01/2020	Yes	No
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes
<a href="#">Study website</a>	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes