



# NORML®



[Home](#) > [News](#) > Study: Clinicians More Likely to Order Drug Tests for Black Newborns

## Study: Clinicians More Likely to Order Drug Tests for Black Newborns

BY NORML | MARCH 16, 2023

**Ann Arbor, MI:** Black newborns are more likely to undergo drug testing than are other babies, according to [data](#) published in the journal *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) Network Open*.

Researchers affiliated with the University of Michigan assessed rates of infant drug testing in a cohort of over 26,000 newborn children. They reported that clinicians ordered drug tests to be performed on Black newborns at nearly four times the rate of other children.

“This study [finds] racial disparities in newborn drug testing unrelated to obstetrical risk,” authors determined. “Our findings strongly suggest that changes in policies regarding drug testing and reporting at the hospital and state level and improvement measures focused on the health, well-being, and dignity of Black birthing people are needed to reduce health inequity for Black parents and their newborns.”

The findings are consistent with those of prior studies [reporting](#) that Black patients and their newborns are more likely to be drug tested for cannabis and other substances than those of other ethnicities.

For example, a study published earlier this month in the journal *Hospital Pediatrics* reported that patients selected to undergo marijuana-specific drug screening during the labor and delivery process [are disproportionately](#) Hispanic or African American.

Data assessing the relationship between *in utero* cannabis exposure and various neonatal outcomes, such as birth weight, is [inconsistent](#). However, [longitudinal data](#) indicates that cannabis exposure is rarely independently linked with adverse neurodevelopmental consequences, [finding](#), “Although there is a theoretical potential for cannabis to interfere with neurodevelopment, human data drawn from four

prospective cohorts have not identified any long-term or long lasting meaningful differences between children exposed *in utero* to cannabis and those not.”

Nonetheless, in some states, such as in [Oklahoma](#) and [Alabama](#), mothers have been arrested and criminally prosecuted for the use of cannabis during their pregnancy. In total, 24 states and the District of Columbia [consider substance use during pregnancy to be child abuse](#) under civil child-welfare statutes and three consider it grounds for civil commitment, according to data provided by [The Guttmacher Policy Institute](#).

*Full text of the study, “Incidences of newborn drug testing and variations by birthing parent race and ethnicity before and after recreational cannabis legalization,” appears in JAMA Network Open.*

---

## PREV

Study: Cannabis Products Improve Health-Related Quality of Life in Patients with Chronic Illnesses

## NEXT

South Dakota: Mixed Bag of Cannabis Bills Advance to Governor’s Desk

## SUBSCRIBE TO NORML NEWS

Welcome back, Laurie!

Not Laurie? [Click here.](#)

**SUBSCRIBE**

**NORML<sup>®</sup>**  
**News of the Week**

- [March 16, 2023](#)
- [March 9, 2023](#)
- [March 2, 2023](#)

- [February 23, 2023](#)

## SEARCH THE NEWS RELEASES



Sponsored Content

## NORML IN THE MEDIA

[More headlines »](#)

## LATEST NEWS



### District of Columbia: Marijuana Expungement Bill Enacted Into Law

March 15, 2023



## State Policy Weekly Update 3/15/2023

March 15, 2023




## Analysis: Percentage of Americans Acknowledging Medical Cannabis Use Has Doubled Since 2013

March 14, 2023

Sponsored Content 





 **NORML**  
about an hour ago

Subjects were most likely to report cannabis to be effective for improving sleep and for reducing pain – findings that are

 @norml



N...



@... · 1h

🌿 Subjects were most likely to report cannabis to be effective for improving sleep and for reducing pain – findings that are consistent with other studies. [#neurology](#) [#cannabisnews](#)

[norml.org](http://norml.org)

Cannabis Oils Effective for Older Patients Wit...

 **natlnorml**

**INSTAGRAM**

## BLOG ARCHIVES

Select Month



---

[JOIN NORML](#) [ABOUT NORML](#) [PRIVACY STATEMENT](#) [SPONSORS](#)  
[ADVERTISE](#) [SHOP](#) [CONTACT US](#)

Copyright 2023 © NORML and The NORML Foundation  
All Rights Reserved  
1420 K Street NW · Suite 350 · Washington, DC 20005  
202-483-5500 · [norml@norml.org](mailto:norml@norml.org)