

# Israel: the land of milk, honey and cannabis

Dr. Stacy Shoshan, MD, PhD <sup>1,2,3</sup>; Iris Levy, MA<sup>4</sup>; Dr. Paola Rosca, MD, MPP <sup>4</sup>

1 – Adelson Clinic for Drug Abuse Treatment and Research, Tel Aviv, Israel; 2- Association for Public Health, Israel;  
3 – Tel Aviv University, Faculty of Medicine, Israel; 4 – Department for the Treatment of Substance Abuse, Ministry of Health, Israel

### 1. Background

Cannabis use in Israel has escalated exponentially. This dramatic increase in cannabis use has led to paralleled increases in psychiatric disorders and admissions to residential drug treatment centers as evidenced by data from the Israeli Ministry of Health Department for the Treatment of Substance Abuse.

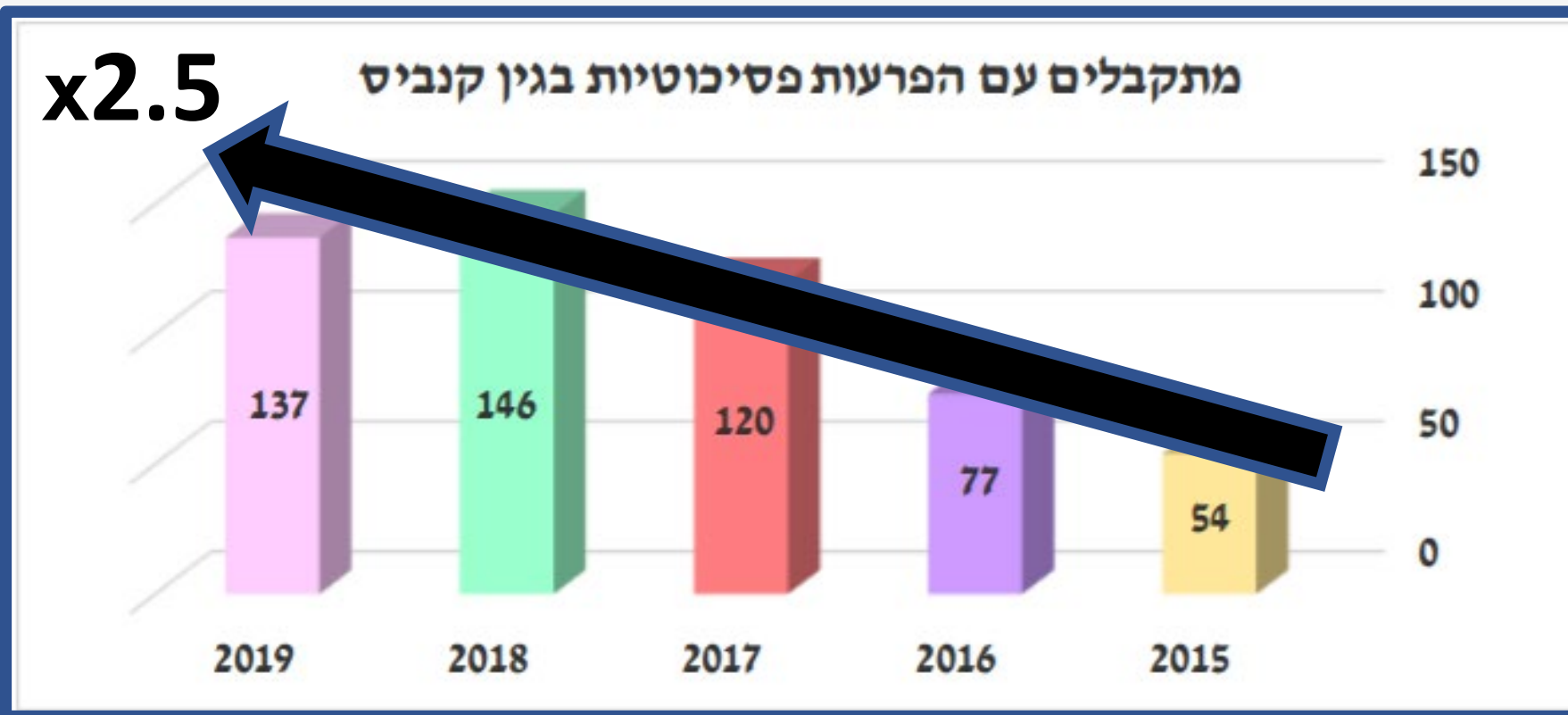
### 2. Psychiatric disorders due to cannabis

Israeli data shows that emergency room visits due to mental and behavioral disorders from using cannabis have gone up 825% between 2010 and 2019. Psychotic outbreaks requiring hospital admission due to cannabis use increased 2.5 fold between 2015 and 2019.

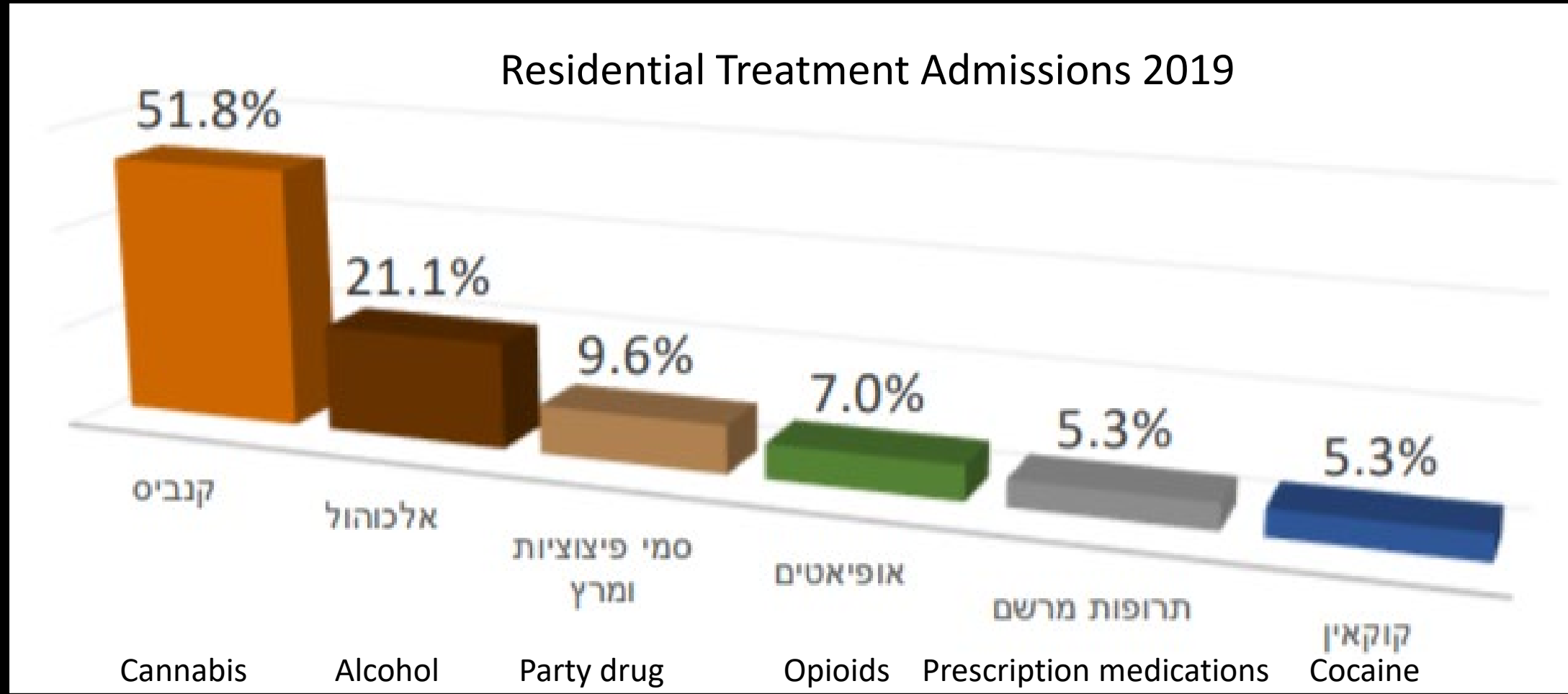
שנה	קבלות	מתקבלים
2010	102	98
2011	132	129
2012	156	153
2013	162	156
2014	210	201
2015	267	260
2016	376	368
2017	679	650
2018	834	800
2019	943	900

↑825%

Emergency room visits due to cannabis use



Psychotic outbreaks requiring hospital admission due to cannabis use



### 3. Cannabis is the primary substance leading to drug treatment admission

Also in 2019, amongst drug and alcohol residential treatment centers where polysubstance use has become the norm, cannabis was reported as the primary substance leading to treatment admission. 52% of those admitted to treatment listed cannabis as their drug of choice, with a huge gap between cannabis and alcohol in second place at 21%.

### 4. Conclusion

All of these statistics are particularly concerning since cannabis is currently available not only in the black market and online in Israel, but also as "medical cannabis." The most alarming issue is that Israel will most likely become the 3rd nation in the world to officially legalize cannabis within the next year.