



PSYCHEDELIC RESEARCH SNAPSHOT

Health and Safety Claims in Canadian Psilocybin Dispensaries

Overview

In 2024, unregulated psilocybin dispensaries were openly operating in over a third of Canada's major cities.

Despite psilocybin's restricted status, these stores sell a wide range of psilocybin products, from dried mushrooms to copycat edibles.

But what are dispensaries advertising about psilocybin's benefits and risks?

Psilocybin Today

Over the past two decades, scientific interest in psilocybin has grown rapidly. Early clinical trials suggest psychedelic-assisted therapy may help treat conditions like depression and PTSD.

Public interest in psychedelics has risen alongside the research, with an estimated 6% of 20-24-year-olds reporting hallucinogen use in the past year in Canada.

Currently, there are no publicly available psilocybin products in Canada, with authorization currently limited to clinical trials and the Special Access Program.

Methodology

Canadian researchers Matsukubo et al. set out to map and characterize offerings and product labels for every psilocybin dispensary storefront in Canada.

Study Design: Cross-sectional design using systematic web searches and content analysis.

Study Duration: Data was collected at two time points, November 2023 and May 2024.

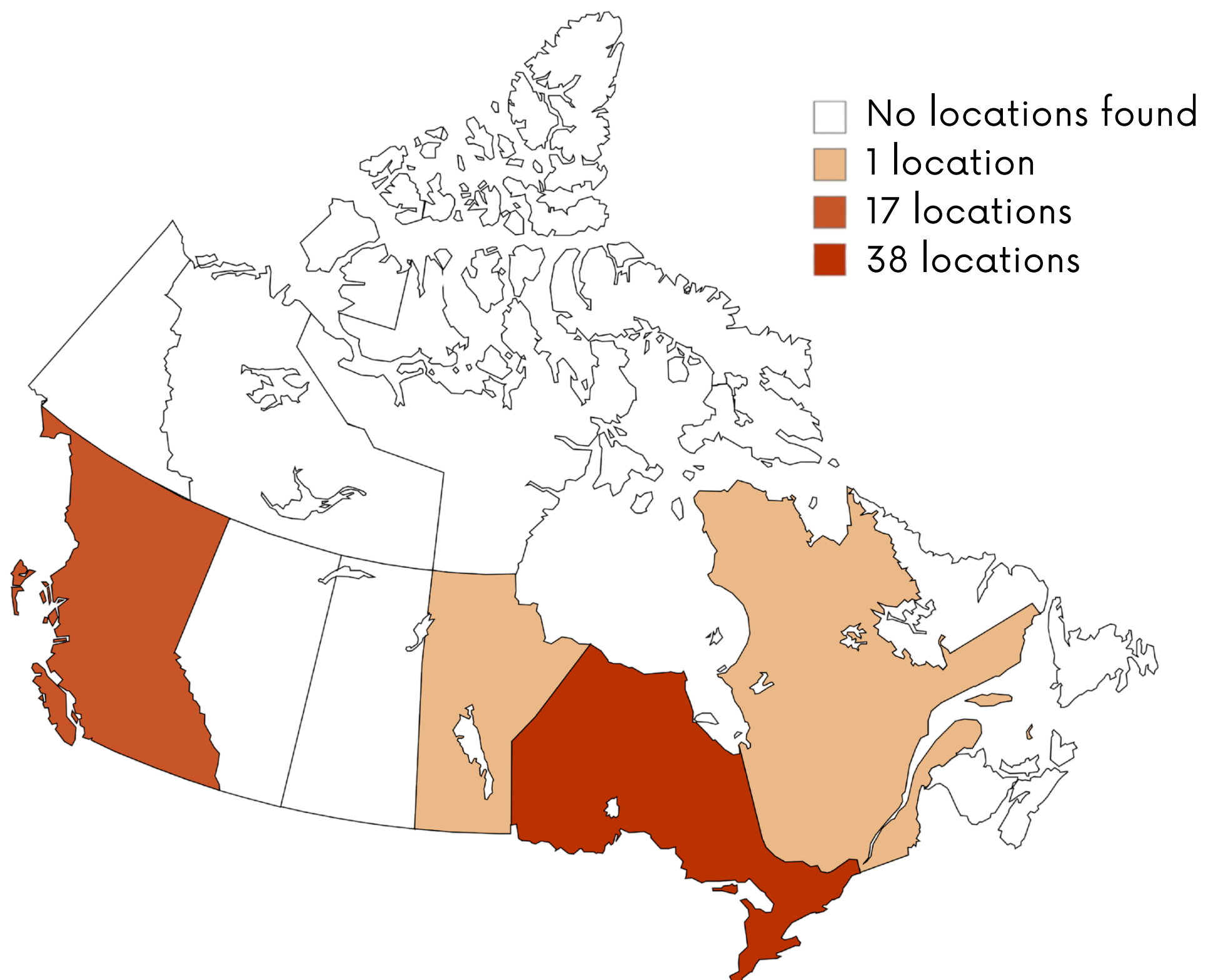
Search Strategy: Systematic Google searches across 42 of Canada's major urban centers.

Dispensaries Included: 57 dispensaries operating in Canada, including independent stores and chains.

Key Data Extracted: Store and website information, products sold, health claims, and safety warnings.

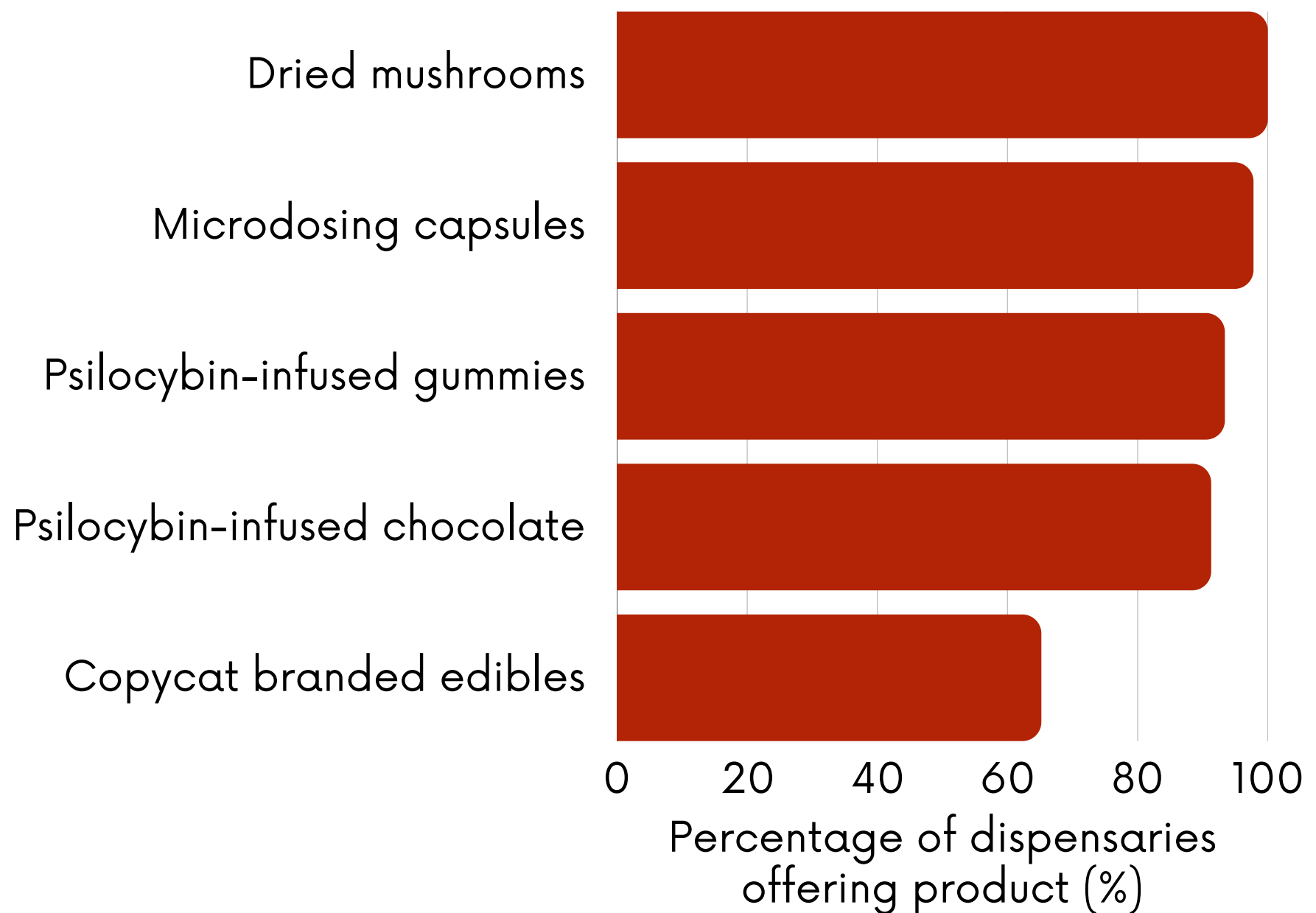
Dispensary Distribution

Researchers identified 57 psilocybin dispensaries operating across 15 of Canada's 42 major cities, with Ontario and British Columbia containing 96.5% of all physical storefronts.



Store Offerings

61.4% of the studied dispensaries were part of a chain, with the rest being independently operated. Nearly all had an online presence (91.2%) and offered delivery services (88%). They offered a wide range of products, as displayed below.



Health Claims

Most dispensary websites made claims about psilocybin's health benefits, but very few supported claims with any evidence.

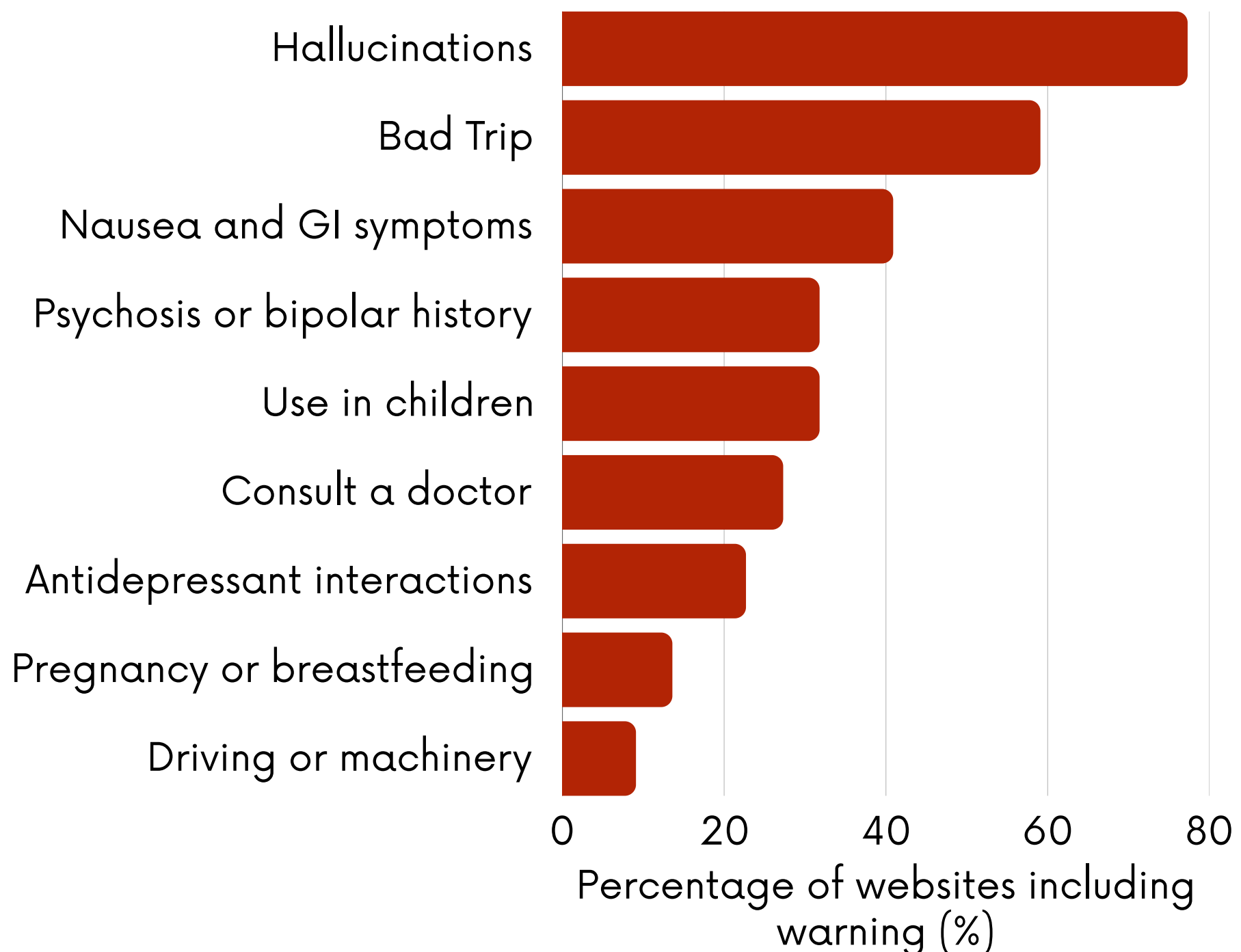
86.4% of websites claimed mental health benefits, most commonly for anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Another **45.5% made physical health claims**, including claims about pain relief and migraines.

Only **9.1% of websites cited any evidence** to support these claims. And only 22.7% mentioned that benefits are associated with psychedelic-assisted therapy, not from psilocybin use alone.

Missing Warnings

While 86.4% of websites included some warnings, often the most clinically significant ones were left out.

Only 31.8% warned against use in people with a history of psychosis, schizophrenia, or bipolar disorder. And only 9.1% warned against driving or risky behaviour.



Limitations

This study captured an important snapshot of Canada's unregulated psilocybin market, but it has some limitations worth noting.

Only brick-and-mortar stores were included. Online retailers, delivery services, street dealers, and home cultivation were not captured, meaning the true scale of unregulated access is likely much larger.

The data reflects two points in time. Between November 2023 and May 2024, eleven stores closed, and others may have opened.

Stores were identified through web and media presence. Dispensaries without an online footprint may have been missed entirely.

Future Directions

Canada's interest in psilocybin has outpaced regulations designed to protect consumers.

Close the regulatory gap: Cannabis and prescription drug rules already prohibit unverified health claims and mandate warning labels. Extending similar standards to psilocybin would address the most immediate risks.

Anticipate product-level harms: Copycat edibles mimicking snack brands raise concerns about accidental ingestion, echoing patterns documented with cannabis edibles.

Continue monitoring: The dispensary landscape shifted substantially within six months. Ongoing monitoring is needed to inform timely policy.

Reference

Psilocybin Dispensaries and Online Health Claims in Canada.

Matsukubo, J., Dickson, S., Xiao, J., Friesen, E. L., Solmi, M., Fiedorowicz, J. G., Fischer, B., & Myran, D. T. (2025).

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