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CANNABINOID CHRONICLES

Medical Cannabis News and Information

Cannabis Rated Most Effective for Treating Fibromyalgia in Survey

An online survey, presented by The National Pain Foundation (USA), has found that medical cannabis is far more effective at treating symptoms of fibromyalgia than any of the three prescription drugs approved by the American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat the disorder. The findings were based upon responses by over 1300 fibromyalgia patients.

The FDA has approved only three drugs – Cymbalta, Lyrica and Savella — for the treatment of fibromyalgia. Although they generate billions of dollars in annual sales for Pfizer, Eli Lilly, Forest Laboratories and other drug makers, most who have tried the medications say they don't work.

Many who responded to the survey had tried all three FDA approved drugs. Asked to rate the effectiveness of

Eli Lilly's Cymbalta (Duloxetine), 60% of those who tried the drug said it did not work for them. Only 8% said it was very effective and 32% said it helps a little. Among those who tried Pfizer's Lyrica (Pregabalin), 61% said it did not work at all. Only 10% said it was very effective and 29% said it helps a little. Asked to rate the effectiveness of Forest Laboratories' Savella (Milnacipran), 68% of those who said they tried the drug said it didn't work. Only 10% said it was very effective and 22% said it helps a little.

About 70% of the people who responded to the survey said they had not tried medical cannabis, but those who have said it was far more effective than any of the FDA-approved drugs.

Sixty-two percent who have tried cannabis said it was very effective at treating their fibromyalgia symptoms. Another 33% said it helped a little and only 5% said it did not help at all.

Other survey findings:

- Four out of ten (43%) fibromyalgia sufferers feel their physician is not knowledgeable about the disorder.
- Over a third (35%) feel their physician does not take their fibromyalgia seriously.
- 45% feel their family and friends do not take their fibromyalgia seriously.
- Nearly half (49%) said their fibromyalgia symptoms began at a relatively young age (18-34).
- Only 11% were diagnosed with fibromyalgia within the first year of symptoms.

44% said it took five or more years before they were diagnosed with fibromyalgia. The 1,339 people who participated in the survey were self-selected as fibromyalgia sufferers; 96% of them were female.

Source:

<http://americannewsreport.com/nationalpainreport/marijuana-rated-most-effective-for-treating-fibromyalgia-8823638.html>

The VICS would like to thank Doug Devore for producing various functional and other pieces of art that are on display at our office. Below is his latest creation:



The legalization of cannabis for medicinal purposes has not increased cannabis use in adolescents

Among the concerns of those who oppose legalization of cannabis for medical purposes was that one way or the other, the cannabis would find its way to young people and encourage more drug use. But a new study shows that it just hasn't happened. The study, published in the latest issue of the *Journal of Adolescent Health* and led by Esther K. Choo, of Brown University's Alpert Medical School, Providence, Rhode Island, USA, says: "Our study suggests that - at least thus far - the legalization of marijuana for medical purposes has not increased adolescent marijuana use, a finding supported by a growing body of literature."

The researchers looked at reported cannabis use by adolescents in states where medical cannabis is now legal, both before and after the laws were passed, and compared those numbers with nearby states where cannabis remains illegal for all purposes. The sample was 11.7 million students. Across years and all states, past-month cannabis use was common (20.9%). There were no statistically significant differences in cannabis use before and after policy change for any state pairing.

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24742758>

Large French study confirms good safety profile of cannabis with regard to cardiovascular disease

The number of heart attacks and other cardiovascular problems blamed on cannabis was five events in 2006 and 11 events in 2010 out of about 1.2 million cannabis users. In France, serious cases of abuse and dependence in response to the use of psychoactive substances must be reported to the national system of the French Addictovigilance Network. In the years 2006 to 2010 1.8% of all cannabis-related reports (35 of 1979) were cardiovascular complications.

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24674455>

A cannabigerol derivative protects nerve cells in animal model of multiple sclerosis

In experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis, an animal model of MS, a derivative of the natural cannabinoid cannabigerol (CBG) reduced cell infiltrates and suppressed inflammation in the spinal cord. Authors wrote that "this study highlights the therapeutic potential of VCE-003 as an agent for the treatment of human immune diseases with both inflammatory and autoimmune components."

Instituto Cajal, Madrid, Spain.

Source: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24727978

Report of a parent survey of cannabidiol-enriched cannabis use in pediatric treatment-resistant epilepsy

Severe childhood epilepsies are characterized by frequent seizures, neurodevelopmental delays, and impaired quality of life. In these treatment-resistant epilepsies, families often seek alternative treatments. This survey explored the use of high cannabidiol (CBD) cannabis in children with treatment-resistant epilepsy.

The survey was presented to parents belonging to a Facebook group dedicated to sharing information about the use of cannabidiol-enriched cannabis to treat their child's seizures. Nineteen responses met the following inclusion criteria for the study: a diagnosis of epilepsy and current use of cannabidiol-enriched cannabis. Thirteen children had Dravet syndrome, four had Doose syndrome, and one each had Lennox-Gastaut syndrome and idiopathic epilepsy. The average number of antiepileptic drugs (AEDs) tried before using cannabidiol-enriched cannabis was 12. Sixteen (84%) of the 19 parents reported a reduction in their child's seizure frequency while taking cannabidiol-enriched cannabis. Of these, two (11%) reported complete seizure freedom, eight (42%) reported a greater than 80% reduction in seizure frequency, and six (32%) reported a 25-60% seizure reduction. Other beneficial effects included increased alertness, better mood, and improved sleep. Side effects included drowsiness and fatigue.

The survey shows that parents are using cannabidiol-enriched cannabis as a treatment for their children with treatment-resistant epilepsy. Because of the increasing number of states that allow access to medical cannabis, its use will likely be a growing concern for the epilepsy community. Safety and tolerability data for cannabidiol-enriched cannabis use among children are not available. Objective measurements of a standardized preparation of pure cannabidiol are needed to determine whether it is safe, well tolerated, and efficacious at controlling seizures in this pediatric population with difficult-to-treat seizures.

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24237632>

American Academy of Neurology confirms medical value of cannabis in certain conditions

A review by the American Academy of Neurology concludes that cannabinoids may be effective in spasticity, pain and bladder dysfunction in multiple sclerosis and that there is only limited data available on Tourette syndrome, cervical dystonia, and epilepsy. (*So why is cannabis still a Schedule 1 drug in USA??*)

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24778283>

(IACM) Bulletin Excerpts continued

More than 100 children with epilepsy receive a new cannabis extract rich in CBD

The British company GW Pharmaceuticals announced that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has allowed the conduction of clinical studies with Epidiolex, their cannabis extract that contains cannabidiol (CBD) as its active ingredient, for use in treating children with Dravet syndrome, a rare and severe form of infantile-onset, genetic, drug-resistant epilepsy syndrome. The company hopes to start the trials in 2014.

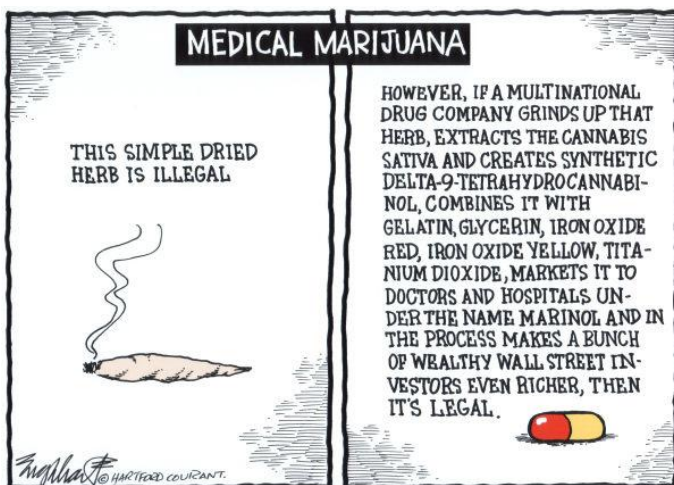
In addition to GW's clinical development program for Epidiolex in Dravet syndrome, GW has also made arrangements to enable independent U.S. paediatric epilepsy specialists to treat high need paediatric epilepsy cases with Epidiolex immediately. To date, a total of 125 children with epilepsy receive this medication.

Source: [http://www.gwpharm.com/GW Pharmaceuticals Provides Update on Orphan Program in Childhood Epilepsy for Epidiolex.aspx](http://www.gwpharm.com/GW%20Pharmaceuticals%20Provides%20Update%20on%20Orphan%20Program%20in%20Childhood%20Epilepsy%20for%20Epidiolex.aspx)

CB1 receptor availability in the amygdala associated with trauma-related symptoms

Trauma-related psychopathology is comprised of threat (for example re-experiencing, avoidance, and hyper arousal) and loss (for example, depression, generalized anxiety). Results of a new study revealed that increased CB1 receptor availability in the amygdala, a certain brain region, was associated with increased threat. Greater peripheral anandamide levels were associated with decreased threat. Authors noted that "novel pharmacotherapies that target the CB1 system may provide a more focused, mechanism-based approach to mitigating this core aspect of trauma-related psychopathology."

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24820537>



Hundreds Sue Ottawa Over Medical Cannabis

The lawsuits challenging Ottawa's attempted overhaul of the medical cannabis system continue to pile up, meaning the government will be forced to defend the new regulations in multiple courts as patients across the country claim they have a Charter right to grow their own cannabis.

Hundreds of people have filed lawsuits in recent months in various courts, arguing the new regulations restricting marijuana production to licensed commercial growers are unconstitutional. Most of those cases have been delayed until the results of an ongoing Federal Court case, expected to be heard in February 2015, challenging the new regime. The judge in that case issued an injunction allowing many patients to continue growing at home in the meantime.

But three patients in B.C. say their circumstances are too different to simply wait for the existing Federal Court case to play out. Even the injunction doesn't go far enough to meet their medical marijuana needs. Their lawsuits argue limiting patients to dried cannabis means they cannot consume it in the way that works best for them. Their lawyer, Kirk Tousaw, said he'll be asking for a temporary injunction to exempt his clients from the new rules until their cases are heard.

Source: <http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v14/n432/a10.html>

Time to End the War on Drugs

The decades-long global war on drugs has failed and it's time to shift the focus from mass incarceration to public health and human rights, according to a new report endorsed by five Nobel Prize-winning economists. The report, titled "*Ending the Drug Wars*" and put together by the London School of Economics' IDEAS center, looks at the high costs and unintended consequences of drug prohibitions on public health and safety, national security and law enforcement. The report urges the world's governments to reframe their drug policies around treatment and harm reduction rather than prosecution and prison.

It is also aimed at the United Nations General Assembly, which is preparing to convene a special session on drug policy in 2016. The hope is to push the U.N. to encourage countries to develop their own policies, because the report declares the current one-size-fits-all approach has not proved to be effective.

The full report can be downloaded from:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/LSE-IDEAS-DRUGS-REPORT-FINAL-WEB.pdf>

Source: www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/06/end-drug-war_n_5275078.html

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VIPWA
101-1139 Yates Street, Victoria
250-382-7927

**The Action Committee of
People with Disabilities**
948 View Street, Victoria
250-383-4105

MS Society of Canada
1004 North Park Street, Victoria
(250) 388-6496

HepC BC
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250- 595-3892

BC Cancer Agency
2410 Lee Ave, Victoria
(250) 519-5500

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www.safeaccess.ca

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www.johnconroy.com

Kirk Tousaw, Barrister
604-836-1420
www.tousawlaw.ca

DrugSense
www.drugsense.org

**BC Coalition of People
With Disabilities**
1-800-663-1278

Health Canada
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/marihuana/index-eng.php>

Drug Policy Alliance
www.drugpolicy.org

Media Awareness Project
www.mapinc.org

**Together Against Poverty
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302-895 Fort Street, Victoria
250-361-3521

Authorised Licensed Producer Goes Organic

The first legal organic medical cannabis production site in Canada may soon be found in Whistler, BC. The Whistler Medical Marijuana Co., one of a number of Authorised Licensed Producers producing cannabis under the new Marihuana for Medical Purposes (MMPR) program, is awaiting organic certification. The owners are confident they'll have that ticket by summer, potentially making it the first commercial organic medical cannabis producer in the world.

The technique employs a labour-intensive, integrative pest-management system that uses three lines of defence: soil, aggressive hygiene and what are called "happy bugs" by organic consultant Peter Doig.

"Our final line of defence is biological controls. So we have inoculated the soil with beneficial fungi that keep plant pathogens out and we use certain predators and beneficial insects to keep any pests away from the crop," he says.

Source: www.vancouversun.com/business/Whistler+producer+aims+Canada+first+organic+grower/9824239/story.html

Cannabis Vending Machines Featured in Vancouver Medical Dispensary

An East Vancouver medical cannabis dispensary -- B.C. Pain Society -- has installed what it believes to be the first cannabis vending machine in Canada, and society director Chuck Varabioff said clients have embraced the new concept.

Varabioff said the machine saves on labour, cuts down on potential theft and reduces the number of people handling the product. The cash-only vending machine, which was installed in April, dispenses change and offers a wide range of cannabis strains in varying amounts.

Source: www.vancouversun.com/business/Vancouver+seller+high+ hopes+vending+machines/9816538/story.html

"The marvel of history is the patience with which men and women submit to burdens unnecessarily laid upon them by their governments."

-- William E. Borah, US Senator