

NAPCRG 52nd Annual Meeting — Abstracts of Completed Research 2024.

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Title

Cannabis for pain management among women of reproductive age in Pennsylvania.

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Pain management

Presenters

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Abstract

Context Persistent pain is a frequent, complex health concern, often refractory to treatment. Despite limited research evidence, many patients perceive cannabis as a worthwhile alternative treatment for pain.

Objective To assess the use and perceived usefulness of medical cannabis for pain care.

Study Design An anonymous online survey was emailed to potential participants. Data was collected from August through October 2023. Descriptive statistics summarized the data.

Setting Medical cannabis dispensary in south-central Pennsylvania.

Population Females of reproductive age (18-55 years old) who were the cannabis dispensary clients.

Instrument: Survey questions asked the respondents about demographics, and cannabis use, indications, and experiences, especially in relation to pain.

Outcome Measures N/A

Results Among 847 survey respondents, the majority identified as white (88.3%) and non-Hispanic/Latino (86.7). They were, on average, $38.8 \pm$ standard deviation (SD) 8.9 years old, started using cannabis at the age of 18.6 ± 7.5 (range: 5-51) years, and were authorized to use medical cannabis for 3.4 ± 3.4 years, with most (90.8%) authorized to use it for multiple indications; 392 (46.3%) reported pain as one of the indications.

The majority of participants (n= 392, 46.3%) who used medical cannabis for pain self-care stated it helped their pain (94.9%). Over the past 30 days, the majority (71.9%) reported daily cannabis use,

mainly through vaporization (80%) and smoking (72%), followed by swallowing (42%), oral absorption (38%) or topically (38%). Most of females using cannabis for pain care reported no side effects (261/392; 66.6%); the most common adverse effects, were worse memory (68/392, 17.3%) and anxiety (51/392, 13.0%).

Conclusions Pain is a common reason for medical cannabis authorization among females of reproductive age. Medical cannabis, used in real world settings, is reported by the vast majority of users to help with pain, without serious adverse effects. More research is needed to better understand the effects and role of medical cannabis for pain care.

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