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Concerns among chronic pain patients with opioid dependence regarding Medical Marijuana

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Background: Medical Marijuana (MMJ) became legal in Ohio in early 2018 and many Chronic Pain (CP) patients consider using these products to wean themselves off of opioid pain medications.

Study Design: In an online survey, we queried patients regarding their concerns about MMJ and expectations of its cost. We also obtained data regarding the current cost of MMJ treatment from known sales data published by the Ohio Board of Pharmacy.

Objectives

- To assess various areas of concern regarding MMJ use.
- To assess their expectations of cost in relation to current market prices.

Methods

Setting: Between 4/7/20 and 5/20/20, we surveyed CP male and female patients using opioids at the Western Reserve Hospital Center for Pain Medicine by e-mail.

Statistical Methods: Our descriptive summary included

demographics, individual question responses, and correlations. Outcomes were summarized using mean, standard deviation, range, and a 95% confidence interval (CI).

Results: 242 patients answered the invitation to complete the survey (response rate 23.3%). Their main concern was affordability. Lesser concerns included driving safety, overdose, and disapproval of family or friends, and drug interactions.

Conclusions: These patients' concerns about out-of-pocket MMJ cost are justified by current market prices, so the feasibility of using it to wean themselves from opioids is unlikely from a financial standpoint.

Biography

Daniel Adams, PA-C, MSHS practices acute pain medicine and is Associate Research Coordinator at Western Reserve Hospital in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. He has written IRB- approved protocols for clinical trials of medical cannabis, lectured on cannabis-related topics, and received grants for the study of opioid reduction in chronic pain patients.

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