




Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research, VOL. 5, NO. 3 | Original Research

# The Impact of Medical Cannabis on Intermittent and Chronic Opioid Users with Back Pain: How Cannabis Diminished Prescription Opioid Usage

 normal



Figures



References




Related



Details

To view the list of Figures you need to have access to the full text

Kevin M. Takakuwa , Jeffrey Y. Hergenrather, Frances S. Shofer, and Raquel M. Schears

Published Online: 2 Sep 2020 | <https://doi.org/10.1089/can.2019.0039>

## Abstract

**Objective:** To determine if cannabis may be used as an alternative or adjunct treatment for intermittent and chronic prescription opioid users.

**Design:** Retrospective cohort study.

**Setting:** A single-center cannabis medical practice site in California.

**Patients:** A total of 180 patients who had a chief complaint of low back pain were identified (*International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision, code M54.5*). Sixty-one patients who used prescription opioids were analyzed.

**Interventions:** Cannabis recommendations were provided to patients as a way to mitigate their low back pain.

**Outcome Measures:** Number of patients who stopped opioids and change in morphine equivalents.

**Results:** There were no between-group differences based on demographic, experiential, or attitudinal variables. We found that 50.8% were able to stop all opioid usage, which took a median of 6.4 years (IQR=1.75–11 years) after excluding two patients who transitioned off opioids by utilizing opioid agonists. For those 29 patients (47.5%) who did not stop opioids, 9 (31%) were able to reduce opioid use, 3 (10%) held the same baseline, and 17 (59%) increased their usage. Forty-eight percent of patients subjectively felt like cannabis helped them mitigate their opioid intake but this sentiment did not predict who actually stopped opioid usage. There were no variables that predicted who stopped opioids, except that those who used higher doses of cannabis were more likely to stop, which suggests that some patients might be able to stop opioids by using cannabis, particularly those who are dosed at higher levels.

**Conclusions:** In this long-term observational study, cannabis use worked as an alternative to prescription opioids in just over half of patients with low back pain and as an adjunct to diminish use in some chronic opioid users.

## Access content

To read the fulltext, please use one of the options below to sign in or purchase access.

[Personal login](#)

[Register for access](#)

[Purchase](#)

[Save for later](#)

**Article Pay Per View Purchase:**

**\$51.00**

**24 hours to view or download:**

**CAN**

**Restore content access**

This functionality works only for purchases made as a guest

 **Society Access**

If you are a member of a society that has access to this content please log in via your society website and then return to this publication.

---

We use cookies to give you a better experience on liebertpub.com. By continuing to use our site, you are agreeing to the use of cookies as set in our Cookie Policy. **OK**