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Cannabidiol Product Dosing and Decision-Making in a National Survey of Individuals with Fibromyalgia

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Abstract

Many people with fibromyalgia use cannabidiol (CBD) products despite limited rigorous evidence of benefit. In the current study, we conducted a secondary analysis of a cross-sectional survey of N = 878 people with fibromyalgia to investigate naturalistic decision making around CBD product choices, use patterns, and dosing. We subgrouped participants based on use of high-THC cannabis (HTC) in the past year (yes/no) as previous studies have shown that HTC use influences CBD use patterns. The study population was largely female (93.6%), white (91.5%) and 55.5 years old on average. Participants typically purchased CBD products online or at dispensaries, with purchasing driven by personal research (63%) rather than endorsement from medical professionals (16%). Overall, tinctures and topicals were the most common administration routes endorsed. However, participants in the past-year HTC group used inhalation routes far more frequently than those who did not (39.8% vs 7.1%). Among participants using CBD tinctures or edibles, the average dose per session was 16 mg and 24 to 27 mg per day, although approximately one-third of participants did not know what dose of CBD they used. Participants using both inhalation and non-inhalation administration routes reported greater symptom relief than those using non-inhalation routes alone. However, there was no consistent relationship between CBD dose and reported effects, possibly due to expectancy effects around CBD products or interindividual variability. Our granular investigation reveals variability of CBD product dosing practices for fibromyalgia, and how past-year HTC use influences CBD product use. Future clinical trials should investigate the potential benefits of low-dose (<50mg) botanical CBD products. PERSPECTIVE: This article shows that past-year HTC use strongly influences how people with fibromyalgia choose and use CBD products. Participants typically used <50 mg/d of CBD, and there was no relationship between higher CBD dose and reported therapeutic benefit. Future clinical trials should investigate therapeutic benefits of low dose CBD.

Keywords: Cannabidiol; dosing; fibromyalgia; pain; tincture.

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