Implementing an Educational Resource on Cannabidiol (CBD) for Patients in Western Connecticut

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IMPLEMENTING AN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE ON CANNABIDIOL (CBD) FOR PATIENTS IN WESTERN CONNECTICUT

Brookfield Family Medicine
Brookfield, CT
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Family Medicine Clerkship Project
November 2019-January 2020
2A. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

- Six patients inquired about CBD use during my first week at Brookfield Family Medicine in Brookfield, CT
  - Patients reported hearing claims that it was beneficial for many conditions including arthritis, anxiety/depression, and chronic pain
  - Many questioned the legality of CBD in the state of Connecticut
  - A CBD retailer had been operating over a year within a mile of the clinic
  - One provider at the practice told me he had recently had four patients in one day ask about CBD
  - According the CDC, 23% of all adults in the US have some form of arthritis and more than 1 in 4 adults with arthritis report suffering from severe joint pain
  - Data from Anxiety and Depression Association of America reports that 40 million adults in the US suffer from an anxiety disorder
  - An estimated 1 in 5 adults in the US had chronic pain in 2016 according to a report from the CDC
CBD has become a popular consumer product over the last decade, especially as American consumers increasingly want more complementary and alternative medicines.

However, CBD is not federally regulated and a 2017 article from JAMA showed only 30% of CBD products were labelled accurately.

Past UVM students have made pamphlets on patient education of CBD in Vermont, but there hasn’t been a pamphlet made specifically for consumers in Connecticut where regulations and need may differ.

In addition, there is a lack of general public understanding regarding the efficacy, safety, and legality of this increasingly popular product.
Arthritis contributes to $140 billion in direct medical costs annually\(^1\)

Chronic pain contributes to $550 billion in direct medical costs each year in the US\(^3\)

According to the National Institutes of Mental Health, National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) in 2016, it is estimated that 300,000 people in CT live with MDD, schizophrenia, or bipolar disorder\(^7\)

The average cost of Anxiety annually in the US is between $42.3 billion and $46.6 billion with over 75% attributed to indirect costs\(^2\)
4. COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE ON ISSUE AND SUPPORT FOR PROJECT

- “I do have a few patients who ask about it (CBD)... it is increasing... I mean 10 years ago no one was asking about it and now I’m starting to see it on patient’s med lists. Even I bought hemp shampoo/conditioner for my dog. Patients usually have questions for me like ‘is it safe? Do you think it works?’ Honestly, I don’t feel completely comfortable counseling them on it (CBD). I usually recommend looking up an honest website.”
  - Jessica Stellato, APRN, Family Practice Nurse Practitioner

- “I have 2 to 3 patients ask about it per week. 5 years ago no one asked about and now patients have a lot of questions about safety and whether it will be helpful for their specific complaint, things like pain... anxiety... I think there’s some data that it isn’t that helpful for anxiety/depression. I try to make them realize that this isn’t highly regulated, and patients need to take that into consideration.”
  - Dr. Julia Auerbach, MD, Family Medicine Physician
5. INTERVENTION AND METHODOLOGY

• A pamphlet was created to educate patients on CBD use in Connecticut. This pamphlet included information on:
  • What CBD is and how it is derived from hemp
  • Current legality status of CBD in the state of Connecticut
  • The validity of claims of CBD as backed by peer-reviewed research
  • Considerations when purchasing CBD
  • Answers to frequently asked questions

• Pamphlet was shared with the providers at the Brookfield Family Medicine Clinic and gone over in detail so they could properly educate patients on the use of CBD

Considerations when purchasing CBD

CBD is a tricky item to legally regulate by the FDA. Traditionally, 0.3% of THC from hemp has been considered a threshold for legality. However, it should be noted that there are no regulations for low-CBD products to be removed from living property or seized and processed even if below 0.3% THC, which also has 20 ppm concentration and legality.

What have also been some aspects of the legality that the THC regulators are CBD practitioners who are 0.3% practitioners.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is CBD legal?

- The keynote speaker at the medical conference in the state of Connecticut, CBD is frequently mentioned with CBD as a cannabinoid that has many pain-relieving effects.

Can’t get a prescription?

- The only FDA-approved treatment for CBD regulation, which is approved only by doctors.

What is CBD?

CBD is a group of compounds known as cannabinoids. They are also present in hemp and marijuana. Some studies have also been published on CBD use in the treatment of anxiety, stress, depression, and pain.

Is CBD legal in the state of Connecticut?

Yes, according to the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection, CBD products are legal to purchase and use. Under the current state of Connecticut law, CBD products must be labeled as containing less than 0.3% THC, which is the threshold set by the FDA.

Cannabis laws in the state of Connecticut are defined by the Connecticut Department of Consumer Affairs and the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development.

What is CBD Used To Treat?

There is evidence that CBD has therapeutic effects for multiple conditions. However, more research is needed to determine the effectiveness of CBD for specific conditions.

References

- National Institutes of Health (NIH): "CBD: The Science of Cannabis". Available at: https://www.nih.gov/health-information/cbd-science-cannabis
6. RESULTS AND RESPONSES

- Pamphlet was made available to the providers at Brookfield Family Medicine. It was also distributed to the head of Family Medicine for the health network.

- Responses from providers and patients was positive.

- Providers appreciated having more information readily available to them when counseling patients on the pros and cons of CBD use.

- Patients appreciated having information that they could take home with them.

- No formal data was collected from patients about the efficacy or quality of the pamphlet.
• No formal data was collected on the effectiveness of the provided pamphlet due to time limitations
  • Future surveys can guide what information should be in the pamphlet and what information may not be helpful
• There are many limitations regarding the effectiveness of the pamphlet
  • The pamphlet was only provided in English and may be inaccessible to non-English speakers
  • Future data collected can help guide who this pamphlet should be distributed to. Now, it’s given to those who ask about CBD but there may be patients who use CBD and are not disclosing this with their providers
  • The pamphlet will need periodic updating as new data is published
8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

**Distribute**
Distribute the pamphlet to other primary care and specialty clinics within Connecticut

**Provide**
Provide a brief survey on knowledge of CBD to patients before and after they read the pamphlet to evaluate effectiveness of the educational materials

**Update**
Update the pamphlet bi-annually to ensure the information remains up-to-date

**Check in**
Check in with the clinics using the pamphlet to ensure it is still being distributed to patients and if they are continually finding it helpful
9. REFERENCES


7. National Institutes of Mental Health, National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) 2016, and NSDUH-MHSS 2008-2012. Estimated number of people affected based on total state population of 2,824,290 (18 years and over), Census Bureau data


