

Using Cannabidiol (CBD) to Treat Pain

Take away: Using CBD for pain is not FDA approved and there needs to be more research done to validate its use. There are major challenges in purchasing CBD that is chemically pure and accurately dosed.

Researchers state that it is a promising approach and patients suggest that it works.

Chronic pain is defined as either recurrent or constant, lasting more than three months and often resulting in disability, suffering, or physical disturbance (Urits et al., 2020).

Urits et al. (2020) stated:

CBD products that are extracted from hemp contain less than 0.3% THC and can come in many forms, including oils, sprays, and food, among many other options. Since these CBD products do not contain greater than 0.3% THC, they do not require a prescription like typical medical marijuana, and the products in them are not regulated and sometimes do not contain the same ingredients as marketed. (p. 7)

The authors continue:

While these products have shown some promising results as a treatment for chronic pain, the efficacy of CBD must be questioned since the product contains THC as well as CBD. Furthermore, the safety profile of current CBD products, specifically non-pharmaceuticals, should be questioned due to their false advertising and variable quantities of CBD in the product.

Therefore, careful selection of a CBD product should be made by physicians and patients to ensure patients are taking a high-quality product.

Despite these concerns, CBD is a promising area for the treatment of chronic pain, and further studies need to be performed to evaluate the role of CBD in chronic pain management. (p. 26)

The research basis for using Cannabidiol (CBD) to treat pain is minimal and weak (White, 2019). Many patients use non-FDA-approved forms of CBD, exposing them to the highly variable quality and content control; CBD is often present with THC dosages, adulteration, and contamination (White, 2019). Boyaji et al. (2020) emphasize that CBD is difficult to research because it is often given with THC. “It is difficult to recommend the use of CBD in chronic management. It is also important to note that many companies sell CBD products as supplements, but they are non-pharmaceuticals and lack efficacy studies to support their claims” (Boyaji et al., 2020, p. 3).

Schilling et al. (2020) completed a survey of patients using CBD-related products for pain management. They found that most reported positive outcomes but wanted more information about CBD and to get their CBD from their physicians.

Boyaji, S., Merkow, J., Elman, R. N. M., Kaye, A. D., Yong, R. J., & Urman, R. D. (2020). The role of Cannabidiol (CBD) in chronic pain management: An assessment of current evidence. *Current Pain and Headache Reports*, 24(2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11916-020-0835-4>

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