



AAN 71st ANNUAL MEETING ABSTRACT

Abstract Title: Medical Cannabis in the Treatment of Parkinson's Disease

Objective: The study aims to evaluate medical cannabis' (MC) efficacy and adverse effects (AE) in treatment of Parkinson's disease (PD) symptoms.

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Background: Thirty U.S. states have legislation allowing prescription of medical cannabis (MC). Previous research suggests possible benefits of cannabinoids in treating PD symptoms including tremor, rigidity and dyskinesia; however more research is needed.

Design/Methods: A retrospective analysis including patients diagnosed with idiopathic PD and treated with MC through the NYS Medical Marijuana Program was conducted.

Results: Sixty-two (43=Male, 20=Female) patients aged 71±10 years were included. Primary indication for MC treatment included PD (71%), chronic pain (25%), cancer (2%), and neuropathy (2%). Seventy-seven percent (N=48) reported improvement in PD motor symptoms, most commonly in tremor and spasticity; improvements in rigidity, gait instability, dyskinesia and bradykinesia were also noted. Of patients reporting chronic pain, 85% reported decreased pain with MC therapy. Twenty-five patients were taking an opioid at MC therapy initiation, and a significant proportion (48%, p=0.002) either discontinued or reduced the opioid during treatment. Over half of patients also reported improvement in non-motor PD symptoms, including sleep disturbance, anxiety, depressed mood, and nausea. Forty-four percent of patients reported AE, most commonly somnolence (N=15), followed by disorientation (N=8) and dizziness (N=4). AE were transient or resolved with dose adjustment in 41% of these patients. MC was tolerated well in this population, with only 4 patients (6.4%) discontinuing due to AE.

Conclusions: The study finds that, typically in combination with other PD therapies, MC is a well-tolerated option to improve both motor and non-motor symptoms in PD patients, and may be helpful in relieving some AE of PD medications such as nausea or insomnia. Commonly observed side effects of MC included

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