Title: Treating comorbidities in cannabis dependent patients with nabiximols: findings of a placebo controlled RCT.

Authors:
NICHOLAS LINTZERIS1,2, DAVID ALLSOP3, LLEWELLYN MILLS1,2, ANJALI BHARDWAJ4, ADRIAN DUNLOP5, JAN COPELAND6, IAIN McFREDOR6, RAIMONDO BRUNO7, JESSICA GUGUSHEFF2, MARK MONTEBELLO2,8, CATHERINE SILSBURY9, MELISSA JACKSON5, MERYEM JEFFERIES9, AND THE AGONIST REPLACEMENT FOR CANNABIS DEPENDENCE STUDY GROUP (ARC-D).

1 Drug and Alcohol Services, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, Sydney, Australia. 2The University of Sydney, Division Addiction Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Health, 3 University Sydney, Lambert Initiative Cannabinoid Therapeutics, 4The University of Sydney, Clinical Trials Centre, Faculty of Medicine and Health, 5HNELHD, 6UNSW, NDARC, 7University Tasmania, Psychology, 8 North Sydney LHD, 9Western Sydney LHD

Presenter’s email: NICHOLAS.LINTZERIS@HEALTH.NSW.GOV.AU

Introduction: There is much interest in the use of medical cannabis to treat chronic pain, mood, PTSD and sleep conditions. However, most medical cannabis RCTs exclude patients who regularly use cannabis, such that our evidence for medical cannabis in patients with cannabis use disorder (CUD) is extremely limited, despite this group representing a considerable target population for medical cannabis. This paper examines outcomes for a range of comorbidities in participants enrolled in an RCT of nabiximols for CUD.

Methods: A double blind placebo-controlled RCT comparing safety and efficacy in a multisite outpatient study. 137 treatment-seeking cannabis dependent participants were randomised to 12-weeks of nabiximols (Sativex®) or placebo, in combination with psychosocial services. Whilst participants with acute or severe health comorbidities were excluded from the study, considerable proportions of patients reported chronic pain, sleep and mental health problems at baseline. Outcomes for participants reporting these comorbidities over the 12-week period are reported.

Key findings. 128 participants received allocated treatment, of which 53% reported clinically significant pain (BPI), 48% reported moderate/severe insomnia (ISI), 20% reported moderate/severe depression (DASS-21), 31% moderate/severe anxiety (DASS-21) and 17% met PTSD cut-offs (PC-PTSD), with no significant between-group baseline differences. Treatment outcomes (pain, mental health, sleep) for participants with these comorbidities are presented.

Conclusions: Patients with CUD and comorbidities benefited from nabiximols treatment. Whilst they needed high doses of THC/CBD, treatment appeared safe and well tolerated in this group.

Implications for Practice or Policy: This study suggest patients with CUD and other comorbidities can benefit from medical cannabis treatment and they should not be excluded from such treatments.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:
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