

# Self identified health conditions reported for the use of medical cannabis: sleep disorders and its comorbidities

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### Introduction

There is increasing interest in the use of cannabis for medical purposes. Pain, sleep disturbances and mental health (MH) conditions are the most prevalent self identified health conditions for its consumption in Australia in a recent online survey of medical cannabis users (Lintzeris et al 2018). Whilst some individuals reported using medical cannabis for one condition only, we were interested in examining the prevalence of comorbidities – particularly in the overlapping area of chronic pain, sleep and mental health conditions. Comorbidities can complicate clinical management and can be associated with poorer health outcomes and quality of life.

**Aims:** explore comorbidity of pain, sleep and mental health conditions among medical cannabis users

### Methods:

#### PARTICIPANTS:

An Australian convenient sample of 1748 medical cannabis users.

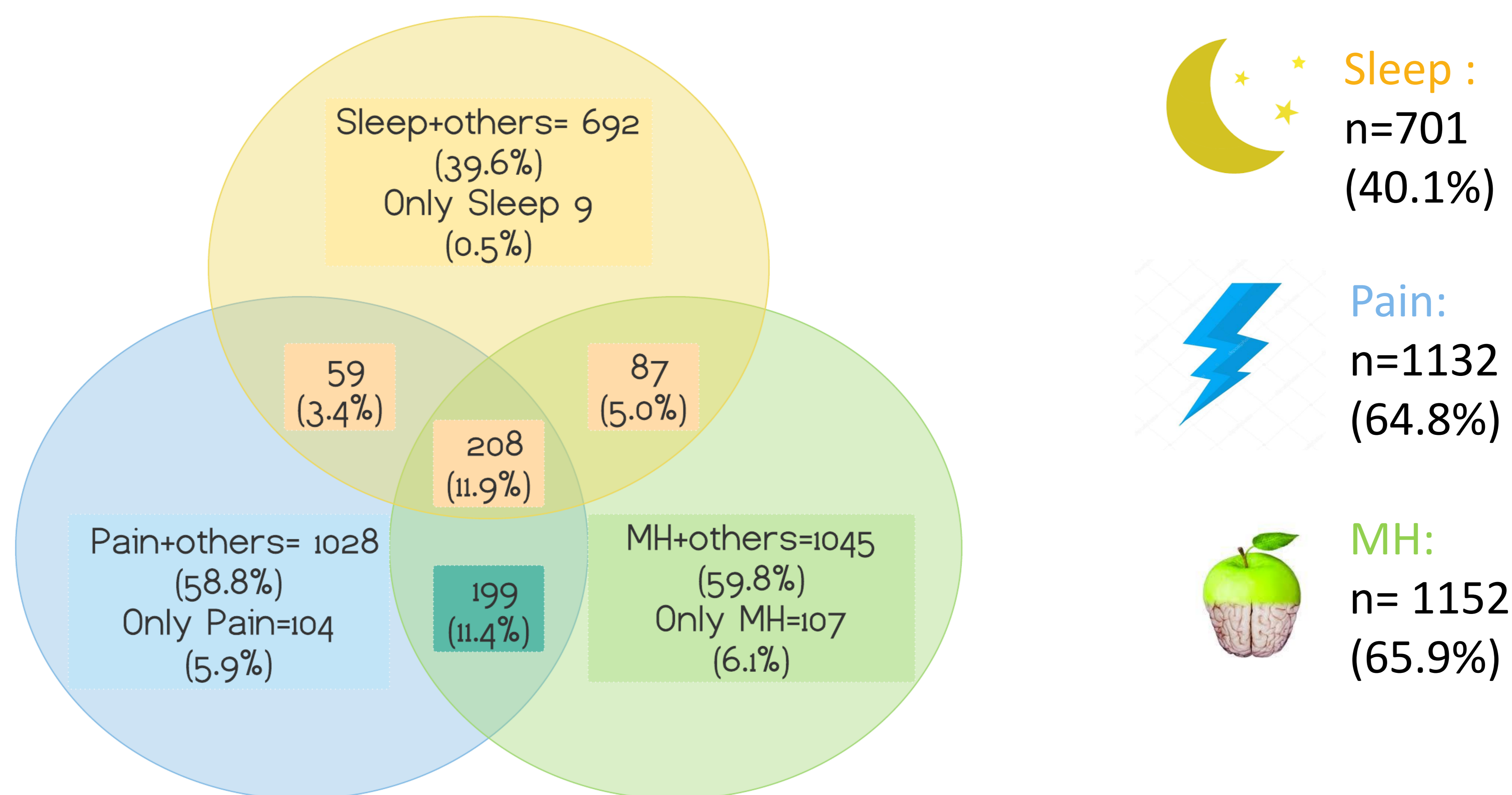
#### INSTRUMENTS:

Cross sectional anonymous online survey (CAMS 16) distributed in Australia via web-based media, professionals and consumer forums.

#### PROCEDURE:

The survey was distributed before the introduction of the legal framework for medical cannabis (2016). Data was collected and managed using a secure web-based platform: Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCAP).

## Health conditions (HC) reported as reasons for using medical cannabis ( N=1629)



### Conclusions:

Self reported comorbidities among Australian medical cannabis users are very common particularly with chronic pain, MH and sleep conditions. Traditionally, research studies focus on single conditions and single clinical/research 'end points', excluding clients presenting with comorbid conditions. In clinical settings, ruling out comorbid clients is not only challenging but also represents a "non realistic reality". Future studies of medical cannabis need to include clients with multiple health conditions, and to include a range of endpoints or outcome measures that better reflect patient reported outcomes and experience.

Lintzeris N, Driels J, et al. Findings from the Cannabis as Medicine Survey (CAMS-16): an online survey of medical cannabis use in Australia. MJA. 2019;211-216.

**Acknowledgements:** Thank you to all the investigators designing CAMS 16, all the professionals contributing to its diffusion and the medical Cannabis users that completed it.



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