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Cannabinoid Use in Patients With Gastroparesis and Related Disorders: Prevalence and Benefit.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: Gastroparesis (Gp) can be a challenging disorder to manage due to the paucity of treatment options. We do not know how frequently patients with Gp symptoms resort to cannabinoids to address their symptoms. This study (i) determines the prevalence of cannabinoid use in patients with Gp symptoms, (ii) describes the patients with Gp symptoms using cannabinoids, and (iii) assesses the patients' perceived benefit of cannabinoids for Gp symptoms.

METHODS: Consecutive outpatients with symptoms suggestive of Gp seen on follow-up at our academic center from June 2018 to September 2018 filled out questionnaires on their symptoms and the current treatments.

RESULTS: Of 197 patients, nearly half (n = 92, 46.7%) reported current (35.5%) or past (11.2%) use of cannabinoids, including tetrahydrocannabinol (n = 63), dronabinol (n = 36), and/or **cannabidiol** (n = 16). Of these, most perceived improvement in Gp symptoms from cannabinoids (93.5% with tetrahydrocannabinol, 81.3% with **cannabidiol**, and 47.2% with dronabinol). Cannabinoids were used most commonly via smoking (n = 46). Patients taking cannabinoids were younger (41.0 ± 15.4 vs 48.0 ± 15.9 years; P < 0.01) and had a higher Gastroparesis Cardinal Symptom Index total score (3.4 ± 1.0 vs 2.8 ± 1.3; P < 0.01) compared with patients with no history of cannabinoid use.

CONCLUSIONS: A third of patients with Gp symptoms actively use cannabinoids for their chronic symptoms. Most of these patients perceive improvement in their symptoms with cannabinoids. Patients taking cannabinoids were younger and more symptomatic than those not taking cannabinoids. Further studies on the efficacy and safety of cannabinoids in Gp will be useful.

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