

# Perspectives of cannabis professionals and educators about medicinal cannabis use in older people

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# Overview

Background

Aim

Methods

Findings

Discussion



# Background

- Medicinal legalization in 2001<sup>2,3</sup>
- Recreational legalization in 2018<sup>2,3</sup>
- Cannabis use in those  $\geq 60$  years old has increased by 4% since legalization.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Older people have unmet knowledge needs about medicinal cannabis and are hesitant to discuss it with their health care providers.<sup>4,5</sup>
- Little is known about the perspectives of the information providers, who advise older people about medicinal cannabis use.

# Aim

To understand the perspectives of those who advise older consumers and potential consumers of medicinal cannabis about the knowledge and consumption needs of older persons

# Methods

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## Design

- Qualitative descriptive<sup>6,7</sup>

## Sample

- Recruited from across Canada
- Self-selected sample

## Data Collection

- Semi-structured telephone interviews

## Analysis

- Content<sup>8</sup> and thematic analysis

# Findings

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## Our sample

- 5 cannabis retailers
- 1 NP
- 1 retired MD
- 1 Pharmacist
- 1 Massage therapist



# Themes

## Seeking Cannabis

- Health reasons
- Administration
- Accessing Information
- Questions

## Cannabis Information Provider's Role

- Prescribing/Directing
- Education
- Retailers' focus
- Barriers



# Seeking Cannabis: Health reasons

- “...they’re the ones coming in saying ‘I’m not sleeping’, ‘I’m in pain’, or My doctor has me on so many drugs that I don’t know how to navigate” (CP 6 - retailer)
- “[Older people say] I don’t want to get stoned, I don’t want that recreational part, I want the medical part” (CP 3 - pharmacist)



# Seeking Cannabis: Administration

- “Older Canadians [are]...reluctant to use anything with THC in it...they’re usually ..open mind[ed] to CBD.....they do not want to smoke” (CP 4 - retailer)
- “Oils always and highly focused on CBD” (CP - NP)



# Seeking Cannabis: Accessing Information

- “After the internet...usually it’s someone in their circle...like their 18 year old grandson who smokes weed ..grandma, you don’t got to hurt” (CP 9 - retailer)
- “It’s a recommendation from their friend or through their doctor..[or] my grandson gave me this. So there is a lot of family input” (CP 3 - pharmacist)



# Seeking Cannabis: Questions

- “Dosing ... and medical contraindications” (CP - retailer)
- “Sometimes they have been to a store...and they’ve been just overwhelmed...how safe is it, is it going to interact with the medications they’re on, how likely is it to work....can they reduce their medications” (CP 2 - MD)



# Cannabis Information Providers' Role: Prescribing/Directing

“Start low, go slow and titrate up to a dose that works for them”

(CP 5 - retailer)

“We’re going to do CBD, we’re going very slow...don’t worry”

(CP 1-NP)

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# Cannabis Information Providers' Role: Education

- “I focus my education...now if someone were to say how do I get this product...I can speak to those things....It is more like a consultation” (CP 8- massage therapist)
- “[Familiarize] them with what currently exists in the market, what they are currently used to, versus this new medication” (CP-2- Pharmacist)



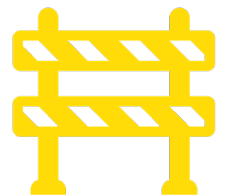
# Cannabis Information Providers' Role: Retailers' Focus

- “It should be definitely emphasized that we are not selling medicinally and that I only sell recreational and I do follow the rules” (CP 7- retailer)
- “The people in the store, ...do give medicinal advice, because I have people tell me...’they told me to do this and they told me to do that’ which is against the law” (CP 2 - MD)



# Cannabis Information Providers' Role: Barriers

- “Doctors aren’t really plugged into this...and have been pretty resistant” (CP 9-retailer)”
- “Doctors are not getting endocannabinoid system training in their medical training... And Health Canada has on cannabis products labels that quite frankly are misleading” (CP 6-retailer)





# Discussion

- Older people are looking for information and access to cannabis for medical reasons, often from recreational retailers.
- Cannabis information providers often either lack knowledge and training or are unable to provide that information to older people about medicinal cannabis consumption.

# Resource for Health Professionals

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Here's the link to the CCSMH resources on Cannabis, which are well laid out and focused on older people: <https://ccsmh.ca/cannabis-and-older-adults-project/>



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