

Cannabis for Chronic Pain: Surveillance – April 2023

Objective and Search Period

This document is based on the 2022 update of a living systematic evidence report, *Living Systematic Review on Cannabis and Other Plant-Based Treatments for Chronic Pain*, by the Evidence-based Practice Center Program at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).¹

The review authors sought to identify new eligible controlled clinical trials and observational studies with comparator groups examining the treatment of chronic pain with cannabis. The search was updated from **Late January 2023 through Mid-April 2023**.

Surveillance Update

One new randomized controlled trial (RCT) was identified during this surveillance period. It was a small (n=15) 32-week crossover study (16 weeks treatment, 2 weeks washout, 16 weeks crossover treatment) conducted in Israel that evaluated 2 low THC:CBD ratio products compared to placebo for chronic pain in patients undergoing hemodialysis.² The estimates of pain severity were very imprecise, with no differences found between groups, and the harms data could not be interpreted due to low occurrence. The AHRQ review team rated the study high risk of bias. The certainty of evidence for low THC:CBD products remained insufficient after incorporating this study due to increased heterogeneity of interventions, inconsistent data, and the high degree of imprecision.

The other new study was a prospective cohort study which is outside the scope of this summary.

See the [AHRQ surveillance report](#) for more details.

References

1. Chou R, Ahmed AY, Bougatsos C, Morasco BJ, Dana T, Gilbreath T, Fu R. Living Systematic Review on Cannabis and Other Plant-Based Treatments for Chronic Pain: 2022 Update—Surveillance Report 4. (Prepared by the Pacific Northwest Evidence-based Practice Center under Contract No. 75Q80120D00006.) AHRQ Publication No. 23-EHC029. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; July 2023. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23970/AHRQEPCCER250.2022UPDATESR4>. Posted final reports are located on the Effective Health Care Program search page.
2. Kliuk-Ben Bassat O, Schechter M, Ashtamker N, et al. Medical cannabis for pain management in patients undergoing chronic hemodialysis: randomized, double-blind, cross-over, feasibility study. *Clin Kidney J.* 2022;16(4):701-710. Published 2022 Dec

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