

Cannabis May Be Best Treatment For Fibromyalgia, Survey Finds

A new survey from the National Pain Foundation suggests medical marijuana may top currently available pharmaceuticals for treating fibromyalgia.

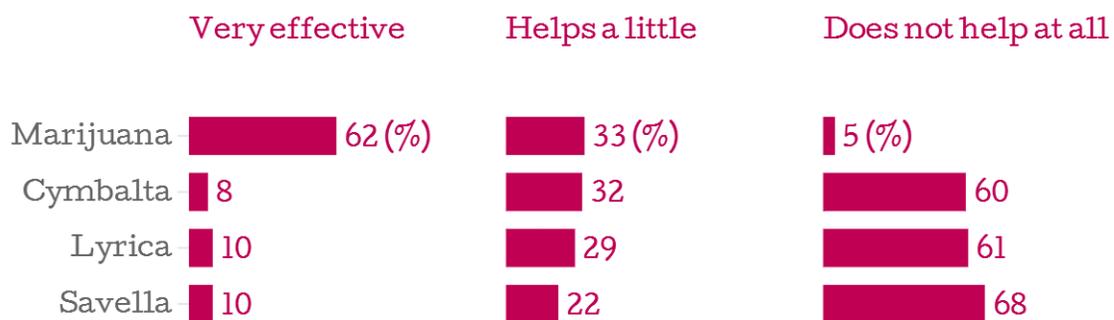
The [survey](#), conducted online, asked more than 1,300 patients with the chronic pain disorder to rate the effectiveness of treatments that they've tried. Medical marijuana was compared with the only three drugs approved by the FDA for fibromyalgia: Savella, Lyrica and Cymbalta.

Just 8% of patients that tried Cymbalta and 10% that tried Lyrica or Savella found the drugs to be "very effective" for managing symptoms of the disorder.

For each of the three drugs, over 60% of patients reported that it "does not help at all."

On the other hand, 62% of patients who tried medical marijuana found it to be "very effective." Another 33% said it "helps a little," and only 5% felt that using cannabis for fibromyalgia "does not help at all."

"I've found nothing that has worked for me, apart from marijuana," explained one patient in the survey. "Nothing but medical marijuana has made the greatest dent in the pain and mental problems," wrote another.



Fibromyalgia is a disorder of the central nervous system that affects 2-4% of the population, predominately females. But while scientists still puzzle over the true cause of fibromyalgia, the latest findings shouldn't come as much of a surprise.

In a [2011 study](#) conducted by Spanish researchers, patients who used cannabis showed improvements in pain, stiffness, relaxation and perception of well-being. "The use of cannabis was associated with beneficial effects on some fibromyalgia symptoms," noted the authors.

Likewise, a [2012 survey](#) found that 1 in 8 Canadians living with fibromyalgia relies on marijuana to cope with their symptoms.

"We think that there's probably a role for that class of compounds, the cannabinoids in general," [explains](#) Dr. Mark Ware, associate professor of anesthesia at McGill University and co-author of the Canadian survey. "It's just a question of working out how that's going to be put into practice," he adds.

An [earlier study](#) by Dr. Ware and his team revealed that nabilone, a pill containing marijuana's active ingredient, [THC](#), could help fibromyalgia sufferers sleep better. Nabilone has also been [shown](#) to reduce pain and improve quality of life scores in patients with the disorder.

Still, some patients prefer natural cannabis over synthetic versions, which are known to have more potent side effects.

"I have patients with a range of pain syndromes who have failed all their other treatments and for whom herbal cannabis has been the only reasonable option that they have that controls their symptoms," says Dr. Ware.

<http://www.leafscience.com/2014/04/21/cannabis-best-treatment-fibromyalgia/>