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Abstract



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Cannabis (medical marijuana) treatment for motor and non-motor symptoms of Parkinson disease: an open-label observational study.

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Author information

Abstract

OBJECTIVE: The use of cannabis as a therapeutic agent for various medical conditions has been well documented. However, clinical trials in patients with Parkinson disease (PD) have yielded conflicting results. The aim of the present open-label observational study was to assess the clinical effect of cannabis on motor and non-motor symptoms of PD.

METHODS: Twenty-two patients with PD attending the motor disorder clinic of a tertiary medical center in 2011 to 2012 were evaluated at baseline and 30 minutes after smoking cannabis using the following battery: Unified Parkinson Disease Rating Scale, visual analog scale, present pain intensity scale, Short-Form McGill Pain Questionnaire, as well as Medical Cannabis Survey National Drug and Alcohol Research Center Questionnaire.

RESULTS: Mean (SD) total score on the motor Unified Parkinson Disease Rating Scale score improved significantly from 33.1 (13.8) at baseline to 23.2 (10.5) after cannabis consumption ($t = 5.9$; $P < 0.001$). Analysis of specific motor symptoms revealed significant improvement after treatment in tremor ($P < 0.001$), rigidity ($P = 0.004$), and bradykinesia ($P < 0.001$).

CONCLUSIONS: There was also significant improvement of sleep and pain scores. No significant adverse effects of the drug were observed. The study suggests that cannabis might have a place in the therapeutic armamentarium of PD. Larger, controlled studies are needed to verify the results.

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