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Nausea Control Using Cannabis vs. Pharmacological Medications While Undergoing Chemotherapy

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INTRODUCTION:

Cancer patients who undergo chemotherapy typically experience nausea and vomiting. The patient is in turn prescribed multiple medications in order to remedy all the side effects. The purpose of this study is to determine if the use of oral cannabis is more effective in reducing nausea and vomiting compared to the use of pharmacological interventions for people diagnosed with any stage of cancer who are undergoing chemotherapy treatment.



OBJECTIVE:

To examine the effect of pharmacological interventions on chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting (CINV) when compared with cannabis, a nonpharmacological intervention, on patients undergoing chemotherapy treatments who experience CINV.

CONCLUSION:

While pharmacological interventions can be beneficial, they also have the potential to do more harm than good, especially in long-term use with the potential for adverse effects. More studies will need to be done on the long-term effects of cannabis. This literature review provided evidence in support of using cannabis as a successful nonpharmacological intervention when compared with pharmacological therapies. This evidence could be generalized to other patient populations suffering from nausea and vomiting related to medical treatment and should be considered for nausea and vomiting control.

ARTICLE #1 RESULTS

Outcome	THC:CBD	Placebo	Absolute difference (90% CI)	Relative risk (90% CI)	P*
Complete response, n (%)	18 (25)	10 (14)	11% (3 to 19)	1.8 (1.1 to 2.8)	0.04
No vomiting, n (%)	50 (69)	41 (57)	12.5% (2 to 23)	1.2 (1.0 to 1.4)	0.05
No use of rescue medications, n (%)	20 (28)	11 (15)	12.5% (3 to 22)	1.8 (1.1 to 2.8)	0.04
No significant nausea (score <2), n(%)	15 (21)	7 (10)	11% (4 to 19)	2.0 (1.2 to 3.4)	0.03
Complete response and no significant nausea, n (%)	9 (13)	4 (6)	7% (0.2 to 14)	2.1 (0.96 to 4.8)	0.12
Mean number of vomits per day, mean ± SD	0.2 ± 0.0	0.6 ± 0.2	-0.4 (-0.7 to -0.2)		0.003
Maximum number of vomits per day, mean ± SD	0.5 ± 0.1	1.4 ± 0.3	-0.8 (-1.2 to -0.4)		0.001
Mean nausea score, mean ± SD	3.2 ± 0.2	4.7 ± 0.2	-1.4 (-1.8 to -1.0)		<0.001

RESULTS:

Based on the results from our selected articles, the literature review supported the use of cannabis on the control of nausea and vomiting for chemotherapy patients. Pharmacological interventions, such as fosaprepitant, were also effective in controlling nausea and vomiting; however pharmacological interventions such as fosaprepitant have many side effects. One article cited participants preferred cannabis over the pharmacological alternatives.



METHOD:

A review of the literature was conducted using Boolean search strategies within the Google Scholar and PubMed databases, both limited to the past five years. The keywords used in the search were cannabis, chemotherapy, nausea and vomiting control, cancer, CBD, breast cancer, pharmacological interventions. 400 articles were reviewed for the highest levels of evidence and narrowed to three articles for purposes of this student project. These three were selected by looking at the titles, abstracts and research methods for the higher levels of evidence.

REFERENCES:

