Medical marijuana helpful for cancer-linked symptoms

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(HealthDay)—Cannabis and cannabinoid pharmaceuticals can be helpful for nausea and vomiting, pain, and weight loss associated with cancer, according to research published online Dec. 10 in *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*.

John L. Kramer, M.D., from the American Cancer Society in Atlanta, reviewed evidence for medical uses of marijuana and cannabinoids.

Kramer notes that marijuana and cannabinoids are used for nausea and vomiting, pain, and for treatment of poor appetite and weight loss. Cannabinoids may also have a role as antineoplastic agents. More high-quality studies of marijuana and cannabinoid pharmaceuticals are necessary to elucidate the various strains of marijuana and their bioactive compounds. Studies should also explore how best to administer

marijuana and its bioactive components; differences are noted in pharmacokinetics between oral ingestion and inhalation and there may be variations in clinical effect for different indications. For example, inhalation may be better for treatment of nausea and vomiting. However, smoked marijuana contains carcinogens, and may cause injury to lungs. Marijuana also has acute effects on neuropsychiatric test performance.

"Both cannabis and cannabinoid pharmaceuticals can be helpful for a number of problems, including many affecting patients with cancer," Kramer writes. "There is also a need for high-quality studies of the long-term effects of marijuana and its cannabinoids."

 More information: Abstract
Full Text

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