

Marijuana may improve quality of life in head and neck cancer

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(HealthDay)—For patients with newly diagnosed head and neck cancer

(HNC), quality of life may improve with marijuana use, according to a study published online Aug. 2 in *JAMA Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery*.

Han Zhang, M.D., from McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada, and colleagues conducted a [prospective cohort study](#) involving patients enrolled at the time of HNC diagnosis. Seventy-four current marijuana users were matched to 74 non-users based on age, sex, and tumor subsite.

The researchers found that there was no statistically significant difference in the mobility, self-care, and usual activities domains of the EuroQol-5D (EQ5D) on univariate analysis. Significantly lower scores were seen in the anxiety/depression (difference, 0.74; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.557 to 0.93) and pain/discomfort (difference, 0.29; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.037 to 1.541) domains for marijuana users. The results of the EQ5D were confirmed in a Wilcoxon rank sum test, with improvements in the pain/discomfort and anxiety/depression domains (z scores, -2.6 and -6.71, respectively). According to the Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS) questionnaires, marijuana users had less pain; were less tired, less depressed, and less anxious; had more appetite; were less drowsy; and had better general well-being. A statistically significant improvement in ESAS scores was confirmed in a Wilcoxon rank sum test in the domains of anxiety, [pain](#), tiredness, depression, drowsiness, appetite, and general well-being.

"Recreational [marijuana](#) use potentially improves quality of life and psychosocial symptoms among patients with newly diagnosed head and [neck cancer](#)," the authors write.

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