Using cannabinoids to treat acute pain

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A new systematic review and meta-analysis showed a small but significant reduction in subjective pain scores for cannabinoid treatment compared to placebo in patients experiencing acute pain. No increase in serious adverse events suggested the safety of using cannabinoids to treat acute pain, according to the study published in *Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research*.

The article entitled "Cannabinoids in the Management of Acute Pain: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis" was coauthored by Herman Johal, MD, MPH, Ph.D., McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada and colleagues from McMaster University and Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Thunder Bay. The researchers included six trials in their study, five using oral cannabinoids, and one using intramuscular cannabinoids. They reported a significant difference in effect size between the oral and nonoral routes of administration, with intramuscular cannabinoids yielding a significant reduction in pain relative to placebo. There was no difference in effect between oral cannabinoids and placebo.

Editor-in-Chief Daniele Piomelli, Ph.D. University of California-Irvine, School of Medicine, states: "The usefulness of cannabis-derived medicines in the treatment of pain, both acute and chronic, is still vigorously debated. The meta-analysis conducted in this study reinforces the need for more rigorous studies to assess whether cannabis might be effective in the treatment of acute pain conditions."

More information: Aaron Gazendam et al, Cannabinoids in the Management of Acute Pain: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis, *Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research* (2020). DOI: 10.1089/can.2019.0079

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