Medical cannabis eases seizures in childhood epilepsy

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Medicinal cannabis could offer patients significant relief from intractable epilepsy, but cost and access barriers remain, a review has found.

Cannabis-based medicinal products (CBMPs) can offer patients

significant relief from [intractable epilepsy](#), according to evidence from a small number of patients.

In a review of 10 cases of severe childhood-onset epilepsy, Imperial's Prof. David Nutt and Rayyan Zafar looked at the impact of combined CBD and THC-based products on the frequency of epileptic seizures.

They found carers reported a 97% reduction in monthly frequency of seizures when patients received whole plant extract cannabis treatments—not currently licensed in the UK—showing a clear benefit among this group. However, despite the clinical benefit, they cite the significant cost for their use and difficulty in accessing the treatments in the UK.

Zafar, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Brain Sciences, said: "Patients and their families deserve better, so we implore [policy makers](#), regulators and public health bodies to prioritize the health of these individuals and help them to access in the NHS medicines which are making a dramatic improvement to their lives."

The full findings are published in *Drug Science, Policy and Law*.

  More information: RR Zafar et al. Ending the pain of children with severe epilepsy? An audit of the impact of medical cannabis in 10 patients, *Drug Science, Policy and Law* (2020). [DOI: 10.1177/2050324520974487](#)

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