

Can medical marijuana effectively treat childhood epilepsy?

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Generalized 3 Hz spike and wave discharges in a child with childhood absence epilepsy. Credit: Wikipedia.

Following media reports of children with epilepsies reportedly deriving benefits from medical marijuana (or cannabis-based medicinal products) accessed abroad, the UK government allowed clinicians to prescribe these products. A review published in *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology* explores the science behind cannabis-based medicinal products in pediatric epilepsies and highlights areas that warrant additional research.

The authors also examined the prescribing environment surrounding these products. They found that a lack of quality evidence for efficacy and safety is the major obstacle to prescribing.

They stress that unlicensed cannabis-based [medicinal products](#) should not circumvent usual regulatory requirements before being prescribed. And they worry that children with epilepsy are at risk of being used as a "Trojan horse" for the cannabis industry, with widespread acceptance of medicinal cannabis accelerating the wider legalization of marijuana and opening up a highly lucrative commercial market.

More information: Martin Kirkpatrick et al, Epilepsy and cannabis: so near, yet so far, *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology* (2021).
[DOI: 10.1111/dmcn.15032](https://doi.org/10.1111/dmcn.15032)

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