

### **Cannabis: Help Your Patients Fight Generalized Pain**

If you have patients who are suffering with chronic widespread pain, I share with you your frustration in managing these conditions. These patients are very frustrated, in addition to often being anxious and depressed after dealing with their pain for a very long time. Now I think you have in medical marijuana a terrific opportunity to help that patient feel better.

In these cases of fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, or other generalized pain syndromes, we've previously just recommended stretching, massage, exercise, recognizing the limitations to all of those things, because folks who are already in pain have such a difficulty getting their bodies moving, and adding some exercise that may, unfortunately, at least temporarily increase their muscle pain.

To make it worse, of course, there was this study from the University of Michigan showing that patients who are experiencing fibromyalgia experience a pain sensation when pressure is applied, for example, to the thumbnail. Those patients who have fibromyalgia experience the pain sensation earlier than in the normal responders who just felt pressure sensation.

Suggesting massage or exercise on a fibromyalgia patient is especially problematic because it's just not going to be comfortable. We really don't have great data that it's going to be really beneficial.

I know you're going to be excited to hear about the study published in the Journal of Clinical Rheumatology in February of 2018. This is an Israeli study that was performed on 36 subjects where they did a pain questionnaire before and after treatment, and treated for between 10 to about 11 months with medical marijuana.

Amazingly, out of all of these patients, all 26 reported improvements in their pain. Only 30% reported adverse events that were mild and didn't result in them discontinuing their marijuana treatment. Astonishingly, half of these patients discontinued their baseline medications and continued on the medical marijuana alone.

If you have patients with chronic widespread pain, you can very confidently tell them that they may benefit from the addition of a medical marijuana product based on this great research. I would recommend that you start with a high CBD-containing product or maybe an exclusively CBD product taken early or allowed to cross the mucus membranes in the mouth by holding the product in the mouth so that the patient can get a longer benefit for it, given that it is a generalized chronic type of pain.

You could also add a low amount of THC to potentiate the CBD and perhaps help in muscle relaxation. A little bit of THC may also help with the anxiety and depression. But remember that a lot of the management of the anxiety and depression is falling back on the CBD. The more

you increase the THC in the product, the more you're taking away the muscle relaxation and a lot of the anxiety control that these patients really benefit from.

I would consider a CBD product or high-CBD, low-THC ratioed medical marijuana product for your patients with chronic generalized pain. When you have some great breakthroughs, let me know. I want to hear about them.