Attitudes About Legalization Of Marijuana For Medical and Recreational Purposes By Cancer Patients In Two Cancer Centers Located In A Legalized And A Non-Legalized State

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Background

Marijuana is one of the most common drugs used. In USA, 30 states and Washington DC have voted on various levels of legalization of marijuana for medical and recreational purposes. In this study, we compared the attitudes of cancer patients in a legalized (Arizona) vs. a non-legalized state (Texas) on legalizing marijuana for medical and recreational use.

Methods

200 adult cancer patients were enrolled from the outpatient Palliative Care centers in comprehensive cancer centers in Arizona (legalized) and Texas (non-legalized). Various physical and psychosocial instruments were collected including a survey designed to determine attitudes of patient towards marijuana. All patients were residents of the state where they were enrolled and no identifiers were associated with data recorded.

Results

No significant difference was found between both locations in attitude towards legalizing marijuana medically [Arizona 92%(85-97%) vs. Texas 90%(82-95%); p=0.81]. Patients who favored legalizing marijuana were younger (median age 59 vs. 67y; p=0.027) and had worse Edmonton Symptom Assessment System fatigue (median 5 vs 3; p=0.015) and appetite (median 3 vs 0.5; p=0.004) scores. Patients who have used marijuana were more supportive of its medical legalization (95% vs 88%; p=0.024). Support for medical legalization was significantly different compared to support for recreational legalization in the overall population, Arizona and Texas (p<0.0001 respectively). Overall, patients who supported recreational marijuana were found more likely to support medical marijuana (96% vs 87%, p=0.022).

TABLE 1. Attitudes and Beliefs of Patients Towards Medical Marijuana

I. Legalize Medical Marijuana			
Site	Agree n(%)	Difference in Agreement (95% CL)	P-value
Arizona	91 (92%)	1.9% (-11.8%,15.8%)	0.81
Texas	90 (90%)		
Total	181 (91%)		
II. Medical Marijuana Usefulness			
Site	Agree n(%)	Difference in Agreement (95% CL)	P-value
Arizona	97 (97%)	4% (-10.3%,18.2%)	0.33
Texas	93 (93%)		
Total	90 (95%)		

TABLE 2. Attitudes of Legalizing Marijuana for Medical vs. Recreational Purposes

	Medical n(%)	Recreational n(%)	p-value
Arizona	91 (92%)	43 (43%)	<0.0001
Texas	90 (90%)	37 (37%)	<0.0001
Overall	181 (91%)	80 (40%)	<0.0001

Conclusion

Cancer patients from both a legalized and non-legalized state showed strong support for legalization of marijuana for medical purposes and not for recreational use.

References:

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