

## **ASSESSMENT OF HOSPICE HEALTH PROFESSIONAL'S KNOWLEDGE, VIEWS, AND EXPERIENCE WITH MEDICAL MARIJUANA.**

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### **Purpose**

Medical marijuana has been shown to be effective in treating pain and other symptoms. Given this growing body of evidence and the legal controversy surrounding medical marijuana, it is likely that palliative medicine (PM) providers will be faced with questions about its use. The purpose of this survey was to assess the knowledge, experience and views of hospice professionals regarding the medical use of marijuana

### **Method**

A questionnaire was developed and an email link to the questionnaire was sent to the clinical list serve for a national hospice care provider. The survey remained open for ten days.

### **Results**

The response rate was 52% (209/400). Approximately 86% of respondents agreed that marijuana has medical benefits but respondents were divided on the addictive properties (46% agree). Respondents over the age of 50 were more likely than younger respondents to disagree that marijuana is addictive (64% vs 47%,  $p=0.034$ ). PM providers are generally (90%) in agreement on the legalization of marijuana. Providers with greater than 5 years of experience were significantly more likely to have been asked about medical marijuana (57% vs. 37%,  $p=0.006$ ) and to have had patients admit that they have used medical marijuana (58% vs. 39%  $p=0.016$ ). Most PM providers (76.6%) would turn a blind-eye if a patient was achieving adequate symptom control from marijuana. The legal status of marijuana significantly influenced respondents views when comparing states where marijuana is legal vs. not legal ( $p<0.05$ ).

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, PM providers favor the legalization of marijuana, are familiar with its uses and side effects, and have encountered its use in clinical practice.