

Survey Results on Medical Marijuana

For this quarter's issue, the CRA surveyed its members on medical marijuana. Marijuana, also known as cannabis, is currently a schedule II drug under the Canadian Controlled Drug and Substances Act. With the ongoing discussions about changing the laws surrounding marijuana, this issue is as pertinent as ever. Currently, Health Canada is working to create a strict legal framework for controlling the production, distribution, sale, and possession of cannabis across Canada.¹ A total of 180 responses were received from CRA members out of a possible 572, equating to a 31% response rate.¹

The first question of our survey asked members how often in a week they were asked to give their opinion on medical marijuana. Forty-one percent of those surveyed responded that they were asked three or more times a week (see figure 1).

When asked what percentage of patients do they estimate are using marijuana for medical reasons, 12% of survey-takers indicated that greater than 10% of their patients were. The full breakdown is shown in figure 2.

The next question of the survey asked respondents how confident they were in advising patients of the current evidence for benefits and risks of medical marijuana. Only 3% of respondents said they felt very confident, with 30% saying they felt moderately unconfident and 26% saying they felt very unconfident (see figure 3).

Regarding the 2015, CRA position statement, approximately half of respondents indicated they had previously read or consulted it and nearly 40% said that they had not.

What's more, 67% believe the CRA should develop an updated position statement on medical marijuana (see figure 4).

As to whether the CRA should develop guidelines (as opposed to just a position statement), approximately 40% indicated guidelines would be preferred. Ninety percent of survey-takers indicated that they do not use other guidelines for medical marijuana use in patients.

References:

1. Government of Canada. Legalizing and strictly regulating cannabis: the facts. Available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/campaigns/legalizing-strictly-regulating-cannabis-facts.html>. Published May 5, 2017. Accessed Dec 7, 2017.

Figure 1. How often in a week are you asked to give your medical opinion on medical marijuana (by patients, colleagues, or friends)?

	Percent	Responses
Never or very rarely	18%	33
< 1-2 times	41%	73
3 or more times	41%	74
		Totals: 180

Figure 2. What % of your patients do you estimate are using marijuana for medical reasons?

	Percent	Responses
0-5%	44%	79
5-10 %	33%	60
>10%	12%	21
No idea	11%	20
		Totals: 180

Figure 3. How confident are you in advising patients of the current evidence for benefits and risks of medical marijuana?

	Percent	Responses
Very confident	3%	5
Moderately confident	18%	24
Neutral	23%	38
Moderately unconfident	30%	58
Very unconfident	26%	54
		Totals: 179

Figure 4. Do you believe the CRA should develop an updated position statement for medical marijuana?

	Percent	Responses
Yes	67%	120
No	10%	18
Not sure	23%	40
		Totals: 178