



## One of World's Largest Medical Cannabis Studies Finds Drug Improves Quality of Life Better than Commonly Prescribed Medications

London, May 11, 2021/ Today sees publication of the first findings from the UK's largest medical cannabis patient study. [These findings](#) show that legally prescribed cannabis provides clinically significant improvements in the quality of life of patients living with conditions such as Chronic Pain, Multiple Sclerosis, Tourette's Syndrome, Epilepsy and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Publication follows expert opinion stating that medical cannabis improves quality of life more than [any other treatment for chronic neuropathic pain](#), as well as an April 2021 statement from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) that, "there is little or no evidence that [commonly prescribed drugs, such as benzodiazepines or opioids] make any difference to people's quality of life, pain or psychological distress, but [they can cause harm, including possible addiction](#)."

The Project Twenty 21 study has now licensed prescriptions of medical cannabis to over 900 patients, who are in substantially poorer health than the general population and who have been unable to manage their diagnosed conditions with commonly prescribed medicines. Their progress has been assessed using the same established methodology ([EQ-5D-5L](#)) that is used to study the wellbeing of [patients with cancer, cardiovascular disease, dementia and numerous other clinical conditions](#).

As such, today's report is the first published Real World Data to be collected on medical cannabis in the United Kingdom. Patients' experiences and the EQ-5D-5L data show that:

- A fifty percent increase in patients' self-reported health and ability to lead a more normal life.
- Significant improvements in patients' ability to manage debilitating secondary conditions such as anxiety, insomnia and depression.
- Patients are now able to avoid criminality with legal prescriptions, as many have been previously compelled to turn to illegal sources in an attempt to manage their pain/life-limiting conditions.
- Prescribed medical cannabis enables patients to reduce or end reliance on widely available medicines that can come with serious side effects, including dependency.

Professor David Nutt, the founder of Drug Science, the organization delivering Project Twenty 21, said, "A lack of clinical evidence has made it difficult for doctors to confidently prescribe legal medical cannabis in the UK. These new findings provide a major step forward and help to clarify the benefit these medicines can have for thousands of seriously ill patients."

## How patients' medical cannabis is prescribed in Project Twenty21

Project Twenty 21 is an observational study that provides a framework to enable data collection but that is not directly involved with either patients or prescribing. This is conducted by specialist clinicians aligned to the study, which is funded by licensed medical producers including JMCC Group. We have adapted the cost of our products, allowing more people to afford them. We have no control over which products are entered into the Project Twenty 21 formulary or which are prescribed by its clinicians. Neither do we have any influence over the study's outcomes.

To obtain a prescription, prospective patients contact one of the study's approved directory of clinics. A doctor will confirm a patient's eligibility for the study, and decide what treatment is best. (This will depend on both the patient's condition and symptoms and could result in that patient being prescribed more than one type of medical cannabis product). Once issued, the medical cannabis is sent to the patient by courier from a specialist pharmacy.

### Patient eligibility and study criteria

Every patient enrolled had at least two "failed treatments" on their medical records (where commonly prescribed medications, such as opioids, had little to no effect on their ability to manage their conditions). Evidence of this previous treatment is a compulsory requirement for participation, and central to the study's inclusion criteria.

Each patient's health was assessed during their initial consultation with the clinician and at a three-month follow-up appointment. These were conducted using EQ-5D-5L methodology. By March 13, 2021, a total of 75 individuals had completed both initial and three-month appointments. Sixty-four percent were male, 34.7 percent were female and one individual identified as non-binary. Average age was 39.9 years (range = 20.2 to 75.7). The vast majority of patients (56%) reported chronic pain as their primary condition.

### Effects of prescribed medical cannabis on patients

- ***A fifty percent increase in patients' ability to live a normal life:*** At the patients' initial consultation, their combined health score registered with a mean average of 40.7 on the EQ-5D-5L scale. When this assessment was repeated at their three-month follow up appointment, the mean average had risen to 61.5 - a 51.07 percent increase, indicating the life-improving effect of prescribed medical cannabis.
- ***Patients also reported improvements in secondary conditions,*** such as anxiety, insomnia and depression.
- ***Ability to avoid criminality:*** Almost two thirds (63 percent) of patients had previously turned to illegal sources in an attempt to treat their medical conditions. With legal prescriptions, patients are now able to avoid this risk.

Dr Anne Schlag, Head of Research at DrugScience and an Honorary Fellow at Imperial College London said, “Our patient population comprises a huge age range, and often have multiple health problems. Also, the low quality of life that they experience demonstrates just how unwell many of them are. Stereotypes of medicinal cannabis users as being young, healthy recreational users looking for a legal source could not be further from the truth.”

**END**

**Notes for editors:**

- For the full report please go to: [https://www.drugscience.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/213\\_2021\\_5855\\_OnlinePDF-2.pdf](https://www.drugscience.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/213_2021_5855_OnlinePDF-2.pdf)
- For patient quotes/ case studies (all of whom are available for filming/interview), or for more information, please contact:  
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**About JMCC Group**

Headquartered in Toronto, Canada, JMCC Group is a fully integrated medical cannabis company, operating within a self-contained supply chain – from propagation and cultivation of raw material supply, product development, manufacturing and packaging through to global logistics and distribution. Founded in 2016, today, JMCC is the leading global provider of premium Jamaican medical cannabis products and services to the world.

**About Drug Science**

Founded in 2010, Drug Science is the leading independent scientific body on drugs in the UK. We work to provide clear, evidence-based information without political or commercial interference - [www.drugscience.org.uk](http://www.drugscience.org.uk)

**About Project Twenty21**

Launched in 2019, this observational study enables eligible patients to access affordable medical cannabis treatment, monitored by Drug Science. The project aims to create the UK’s largest body of evidence for the effectiveness and tolerability of medical cannabis. Drug Science hope that the findings of Project Twenty21 will provide evidence for NHS funding where the benefits of treatment with medicinal cannabis is proven to outweigh the potential risks.

**About the problems UK patients face with medical cannabis prescriptions**

Medical cannabis was legalized in the UK in November 2018, However, big problems with cost and access remain, meaning too few patients are able to use it as a treatment. This 2019 article summarizes these issues in the UK: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/nov/03/medical-cannabis-patients-refused-drug-nhs-legalised>