

For Immediate Release

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Cannabis and quality of life in patients with chronic diseases

New scientific study shows that therapeutic cannabis stabilizes quality of life and does not affect the psychological performance of patients

According to new scientific research, carried out by the Science and Innovation department of the ICEERS foundation, **the use of medical cannabis in patients with chronic diseases could help them maintain a relatively stable quality of life**. Similarly, the study, the results of which have recently been published in the journal *Phytotherapy Research*, concludes that **therapeutic cannabis is quite safe from a neuropsychiatric point of view**, helping to reduce the use of prescription drugs.

Given the paucity of reports in the scientific literature assessing the medium-long term effects of cannabis use on psychological and quality of life variables, ICEERS decided to conduct a longitudinal study to fill this gap. Over a one-year period, researchers followed **a sample of nearly 70 patients with chronic diseases who used cannabis as a treatment for their symptoms**.

The main diseases for which users were making therapeutic use of cannabis were **human immunodeficiency virus or HIV, fibromyalgia, chronic pain and epilepsy**. To carry out the study, different cannabis clubs were contacted and those members who were making therapeutic use of the plant were invited to participate. Participants completed **questionnaires on quality of life, personality, mental health and neuropsychological performance**. They were also asked about their patterns of cannabis use (quantities used, routes of administration, etc.). These questionnaires were administered every four months.

An inefficient system

In the words of José Carlos Bouso and Genís Oña, authors of the study, "in the Human Rights Agora that we organized from ICEERS, we observed that **patients systematically face a very inefficient and extremely slow system when it comes to providing access to medical cannabis, when they need some remedy urgently.**"

In Spain, only patients with multiple sclerosis can access Sativex (a drug with a 1:1 THC and CBD ratio) as a second line treatment for spasticity. In this context, **"patients with other diseases use cannabis within a dangerous regulatory framework, exposing themselves to different risks:** those associated with a product produced and distributed within an informal market; a lack of expert medical advice; social stigma for using a plant considered an "illegal drug"; and the absence of a legal framework, which implies possible repercussions such as administrative sanctions," the authors add.