

&gt;&gt;&gt; NEWSLETTER &lt;&lt;&lt;

# CAN MED

Cannabinoid medicine update



## PEDIATRIC EPILEPSY

### PEDIATRIC EPILEPSY

Cannabis has been used for epilepsy for centuries. The earliest mentions of cannabis clearly indicate it's use for this purpose. In the past 10 yrs however this has really surfaced as GW pharma brought Epidiolex to the table. Epidiolex is a plant based pharmaceutical containing CBD approved for epilepsy. In Canada we have many similar products that work just as well or even better as they have more of the plant in them to help enhance the effects. These can be obtained through Health Canada Licensed Producers by authorization from a physician.

When substances are illegal, it is illegal to research them and until recently this was the case with cannabis. This has led to the stigma and lack of research we face today. In fact in many places one can only research the harms of it, not the benefits due to it's legal status! In recent years, the Epidiolex studies have provided a framework which has proven to be useful for most of the oral Canadian CBD products. Using weight based dosing helps us to integrate it into care and measure results.



## RESEARCH & DOSING

# PHARMA

## VS OTHER CANADIAN PRODUCTS

J.Anderson,MD,CCFP

### ➤➤➤ EPIODIOLEX

Epidiolex was brought to Canada in 2024 by Jazz Pharmaceuticals. It is a plant derived product containing CBD in a concentration of 100mg/ml in a sesame oil. This is carried by pharmacies by prescription.

It is important to note the substantial cost of this product. As of the date of this newsletter it has not been funded in Manitoba and for a 30kg child a starting dose was calculated as 3000\$/month. With these issues, it is important to note the Canadian alternatives that are available to kids looking for seizure relief.



### ➤➤➤ CBD OIL

Over the years CBD oil has decreased in cost and we have higher concentrations to work with. There are many varieties including Charlottes Web which have entered the Canadian landscape. Each one is different due to the terpenes involved. Some blends also carry other Cannabinoids offering a variety of alternatives should an isolate (CBD only) not be clinically effective. We are one of the only countries in the world with affordable alternatives. One important difference between Epidiolex and alternatives is that Epidiolex is an isolate and alternatives are more full spectrum working at smaller doses as they incorporate other cannabinoids and terpenes to enhance their effect. One important terpene is Betacaryophylline. (see last months issue for terpene education)

## EXPERT ADVICE

- **Weight based dosing for Epidiolex ranges from 5mg/kg/day - 20mg/kg/day.**
- **For full plant products, the dosing should be reduced to start at 2-3mg/kg/day due to cost and the fact that they tend be effective at lower doses.**
- **CBD can interact with other antiepileptics so it is important to monitor these kids using any CBD product.**
- **Pediatric access is illegal without a physician authorization. The age varies by province.**

### ➤➤➤ VARIETIES AND COST

Cost is a huge factor. If a child is to try CBD for seizure cessation, they need to be able to afford it long term. The cost benefit to it working is substantial often allowing the parents to work and increased function of the entire family which impacts the community.

Cost of Epidiolex is not funded at the moment and cost of alternatives is substantially less. Most companies will offer up to 90% off to pediatric patients and this can mean that the cost is less than 100\$ per month for the equivalent 3000\$ dose of Epidiolex. This is incredible and insurance companies are taking note as they should!



# MY CANNABINOID JOURNEY

## THE "WHY"

J.Anderson,MD,CCFP



In 2016 my son was seizing multiple times per hour. I was trying to work in family practice and was no longer able to work, spending the majority of time at Children's Hospital. The cost to my family was substantial both financially and socially. After 6 months of being in hospital most of the time as seizures escalated I decided to look for alternatives. This is how I came across the story of Charlotte Figi and advocated for my son to try CBD.



Within 24 hrs of his first dose of Charlottes Web, my son's nighttime seizures stopped. Within a few weeks his seizures in the day dropped substantially. After his dramatic response, I decided to learn all I could about this plant that not only saved my son but dramatically changed our lives. Not having anyone to help me with it, I decided to help other kids in Manitoba. The rest was history. My goal was to provide access and figure out how to integrate it as any other medicine. Looking at what was happening with Epidiolex in the USA, I knew this was possible. My son had to be able to keep using his CBD at home, in hospital and in school and within 5 yrs we accomplished just this. Now the goal is to provide education so that no child should go without the chance to experience seizure cessation with CBD.

