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The Financial and Psychosocial Impact of Medicinal Cannabis

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The Financial and Psychosocial Impact of Medicinal Cannabis

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Introduction: The use of medicinal cannabis for symptom management in cancer patients is a growing area of clinical interest. Past studies have demonstrated cannabis's potential as an antiemetic and analgesic, but there is still much research to be done on its clinical efficacy. Our study hypothesizes that cancer patients using medicinal cannabis experience subjective improvements in pain, chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting (CINV), and quality of life (QOL) that justify related out-of-pocket costs.

Methods: Cancer patients are surveyed by phone three to six months after certification for access to medicinal cannabis. The survey assesses patient-reported changes in pain, CINV, QOL, and financial burden. Patient responses are documented as changes in satisfaction compared to baseline satisfaction using a Likert scale (1-5; 1 = greatly decreased satisfaction, 5 = greatly increased satisfaction). Aggregate scores over 3.5 indicate meaningful symptomatic improvement.

Results: The initial 35 surveys (desired $n = 120$) show moderately increased satisfaction with CINV and pain relief (3.63 and 3.53, respectively), with mildly increased satisfaction with QOL (3.46). Patients report meaningful improvements in nausea, mood, ability to function in daily

life, and pain interference with sleep and general activity. Patients generally do not report decreased financial satisfaction (3.03).

Conclusion: Preliminary data suggests that medicinal cannabis may provide analgesic, antiemetic, and anxiolytic benefits for cancer patients. If future surveys yield similar results, we anticipate that our study could support the use of medicinal cannabis as a cost-effective adjunctive therapy for cancer patients suffering treatment or cancer related side effects.