



VA Portland Health Care System
Health Services Research & Development

Cannabis Among Adults With Chronic Pain: A Systematic Review

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There is little scientific evidence to support whether plant-based cannabis preparation use is effective or safe for adults suffering from chronic pain, according to a recent CIVIC study.

The team of investigators, led by CIVIC HSR Fellow **Dr. Shannon Nugent**, found limited evidence that cannabis improves nerve pain and insufficient evidence that cannabis lessens pain in other pain populations such as patients with multiple sclerosis or cancer. In addition, the review found limited evidence suggesting cannabis usage among the general population is associated with an increased risk of psychotic symptoms and short-term detrimental effects on cognition. Despite this, surveys suggest that 45-80% of individuals interested in medical cannabis seek it to reduce pain.



A companion study, led by CIVIC scientist **Dr. Maya O’Neil** and published in the same issue of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, examined cannabis for alleviating symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Likewise, they concluded there was insufficient evidence to determine whether cannabis use “is a marker for more severe symptoms or is effective at reducing symptoms, or whether the perceived beneficial effects are the result of cannabis, placebo effects, or the natural course of symptoms.”

With the rise of cannabis legalization and usage, the CIVIC scientists emphasize more rigorous studies are necessary to provide stronger evidence to draw conclusions about the effectiveness and safety of cannabis. So far, cannabis has been legalized for recreational purposes in nine states and the District of Columbia, and for medical use in 29 states.

Read more about **Dr. Nugent’s study** [HERE](#) & **Dr. O’Neil’s study** [HERE](#)



Upcoming Events

HSR&D CIVIC Research Conferences, Fridays from 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Room 214, Building 6. Unless otherwise noted.

February 16th, 2018 Dr. Jessica Wyse Presents:

Trends in the Use of Opioid Agonist Therapy for Opioid Use Disorder in VA Over Time.

March 16th, 2018 Drs. Jason Chen & Ginnifer Mastarone Presents:

Community-based Internet Resources for Veteran Suicide Prevention.

March 30th, 2018 Dr. Alan Teo Presents:

Can Facebook Help Reach and Support Veterans with Psychiatric Disorders or Suicidality?



Supported Employment for Veterans With Traumatic Brain Injury: Patient Perspectives

Although unemployment is common among veterans with traumatic brain injury, these veterans rarely use services meant to assist with obtaining and maintaining a job, according a recent study by CIVIC’s **Dr. Kathleen Carlson** and colleagues.



In a study published in the *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, they note that approximately 45% of veterans in the study sample reported unemployment and nearly as many would be interested in using Supported Employment, an evidence-based vocational rehabilitation service, if offered. Nonetheless, just 12% of veterans had heard of Supported Employment and less than 1% had ever used it.

The Veterans Health Administration Compensated Work Therapy program provides a range of vocational rehabilitation services to veterans with disabilities.

Supported Employment is an approach focused on rapid and individualized job searches, unlimited vocational supports, and integration with clinical care; it is considered one of the most robust evidence-based practices for helping individuals acquire and maintain competitive, community-based employment.

Overall, this study found a gap between veterans’ vocational needs and interests and their use of evidence-based Supported Employment.

Read more about Dr. Carlson’s study [HERE](#)

Veteran Patient Perspectives and Experiences During Implementation of a Patient-Centered Medical Home Model

Can you benefit from something without being aware of it? In the case of veterans using a relatively new care model in the Veterans Health Administration, called the patient-centered medical home or PCMH, this may be the case, concluded CIVIC’s **Dr. Anais Tuepker** and colleagues.

In a qualitative study published in the *Journal of Patient Experience* the researchers found that veteran patients noticed recent changes in care such as improvement in communication and shorter clinic wait times. However, the majority of veterans did not attribute these outcomes to the PCMH initiative.

In addition, characteristics such as strong relationships with primary care providers and feeling cared for and respected by everyone encountered in care delivery had the greatest

Read more about Dr. Tuepker’s study [HERE](#)

impact on veterans’ experiences. The authors note that the PCMH care delivery model aims to improve veterans’ care by fostering collaboration among healthcare providers to administer patient-driven and personalized care. They recommend incorporating patient perspectives into PCMH planning and implementation processes in order to continue improvement in this health care model.



CIVIC Member Highlight: Beth Hooker, MS., MPH



Beth Hooker began working at CIVIC in September, 2017 as a biostatistician. Beth received her Master in Public Health in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from OHSU and a Master of Science in Conflict Resolution from Portland State University. Prior to joining the CIVIC team, she worked as a Research Associate for several years in OHSU’s School of Public Health. Beth is currently working on projects with Investigators Drs. Alan Teo, Sarah Ono, Linda Ganzini, Chris Slatore, and Lauren Denneson.

CIVIC Member Highlight: Julia Holloway, BS.



Julia Holloway has been working at CIVIC since the end of June, 2017 as a Research Assistant. Julia’s job for the Center includes duties such as assisting Dr. Travis Lovejoy, helping with core CIVIC administrative tasks, and assisting the hospital’s mental health division – she wears many hats! Julia recently graduated from Northeastern University in Boston with a BS in Biology. Julia ultimately hopes to become a Physician Assistant and stay involved in research throughout her career. Outside of work, you can find Julia exploring the outdoors, doing puzzles, or eating Thai Food.

Recent CIVIC Peer-Reviewed Publications

- Beach, M.C., Branyon, E, **Saha, S.** (2017). Diverse patient perspectives on respect in healthcare: A qualitative study. *Patient Educ Couns.* [Link.](#)
- Carlson, K. F.**, Pogoda, T. K., **Gilbert, T. A.**, Resnick, S. G., Twamley, E. W., **O'Neil, M. E.**, & Sayer, N. A. (2017). Supported employment for veterans with traumatic brain injury: patient perspectives. *Archives of physical medicine and rehabilitation.* [Link.](#)
- Chi, C., **Tuepker, A.**, Schoon, R., & Núñez Mondaca, A. (2018). Critical evaluation of international health programs: Reframing global health and evaluation. *The International journal of health planning and management.* [Link.](#)
- Demidenko, M. I., **Dobscha, S. K.**, **Morasco, B. J.**, Meath, T. H., Ilgen, M. A., & **Lovejoy, T. I.** (2017). Suicidal ideation and suicidal self-directed violence following clinician-initiated prescription opioid discontinuation among long-term opioid users. *General Hospital Psychiatry.* [Link.](#)
- Edwards, S. T.**, Peterson, K., Chan, B., Anderson, J., & **Helfand, M.** (2017). Effectiveness of Intensive Primary Care Interventions: A Systematic Review. *Journal of General Internal Medicine.* [Link.](#)
- Edwards, S. T.**, **Saha, S.**, Prentice, J. C., & Pizer, S. D. (2017). Preventing Hospitalization with Veterans Affairs Home-Based Primary Care: Which Individuals Benefit Most? *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society.* [Link.](#)
- Gonsoulin, M. E., Durazo-Arvizu, R. A., Goldstein, K. M., Cao, G., Zhang, Q., Ramanathan, D., & **Hynes, D. M.** (2017). A Health Profile of Senior-Aged Women Veterans: A Latent Class Analysis of Condition Clusters. *Innovation in aging.* [Link.](#)
- Hujer, A. M., Higgins, P. G., Rudin, S. D., Buser, G. L., Marshall, S. H., Xanthopoulou, K., Selfert, H., Rojas, L.J., Domitrovic T.N., Cassidy P.M., Cunningham, M. C., Vega R., Furuno, J.P., **Pfeiffer, C.D.**, Beldavs, Z.G., Wright, M.S., Jacobs, M.R., Adams, M.D., & Bonomo, R.A. (2017). Nosocomial Outbreak of Extensively Drug-Resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii* Isolates Containing blaOXA-237 Carried on a Plasmid. *Antimicrobial agents and chemotherapy.* [Link.](#)
- Hulen, E.**, **Saha, S.**, **Morasco, B. J.**, Zeigler, C., Mackey, K., & **Edwards, S. T.** (2017). Sources of Distress in Primary Care Opioid Management and the Role of a Controlled Substance Review Group: A Qualitative Study. *Pain Medicine.* [Link.](#)
- Kato, T. A., Kanba, S., & **Teo, A. R.** (2018). Hikikomori: experience in Japan and international relevance. *World Psychiatry.* [Link.](#)
- Kathuria, H., Detterbeck, J., Fathi, J., Fennig, K., Gould, M.K., Jolicoeur, D., Land, S.R., Massetti, G.M., Mazzone, P.J., Silvestri, G., **Slatore, C.G.**, Smith, R., Vachani, A., Zeliadt, S., Wiener, R.S. (2017). An official ATS research policy statement: Stakeholder Research Priorities for Smoking Cessation Interventions within Lung Cancer Screening Programs. An Official American Thoracic Society Research Statement. *American journal of respiratory and critical care medicine.* [Link.](#)

- Kondo, K., Low, A., Everson, T., Gordon, C., Veazie, S., Lozier C., Freeman, M., Motu'apuaka, M., Mendelson, A., Friesen, M., Paynter, R., Friesen, C., Anderson, J., Boundy, E., **Saha, S., Quinones, A., Kansagara, D.** (2017). Health disparities in Veterans: A map of the evidence. *Med Care* 2017;55: S9-S15. [Link](#).
- Nelson, H.D., **Denneson, L.M.**, Low, A.R., Bauer, B.W., **O'Neil, M., Kansagara, D., Teo, A.R.** (2017). Suicide Risk Assessment and Prevention: A Systematic Review Focusing on Veterans. *Psychiatric Services*. [Link](#).
- Nugent, S. M., Dobscha, S. K., Morasco, B. J.**, Demidenko, M. I., Meath, T. H., Frank, J. W., & **Lovejoy, T. I.** (2017). Substance use disorder treatment following clinician-initiated discontinuation of long-term opioid therapy resulting from an aberrant urine drug test. *Journal of general internal medicine*. [Link](#).
- Nugent, S. M., Golden, S. E.**, Thomas, C. R., Deffebach, M. E., Sukumar, M. S., Schipper, P. H., Tieu B.H., Moghanaki D., Wisnivesky J., & **Slatore, C.** (2017). Patient-clinician communication among patients with stage I lung cancer. *Supportive Care in Cancer*. [Link](#).
- Nugent, S. M., Morasco, B. J., O'Neil, M. E.**, Freeman, M., Low, A., Kondo, K., Elven, C., Zakher, B., Motu'apuaka, M., Paynter, R., & **Kansagara, D.** (2017). The effects of cannabis among adults with chronic pain and an overview of general harms: A systematic review. *Annals of internal medicine*. [Link](#).
- Mohr, C.D., McCabe, C.T., Haverly, S.N., Hammer, L.B., **Carlson, K.F.** (2017). Drinking Motives and Alcohol Use: The SERVe Study of U.S. Current and Former Service Members. *The Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*. [Link](#).
- O'Neil, M. E.**, Laman-Maharg, B., Schnurr, P. P., **Carlson, K. F.**, Twamley, E. W., Peterson, C., Storzbach, D., **Helfand, M.**, & Sayer, N. A. (2017). Objective cognitive impairment and subjective cognitive problems in veterans initiating psychotherapy for posttraumatic stress disorder: An exploratory study. *Applied Neuropsychology*. [Link](#).
- O'Neil, M. E., Nugent, S. M., Morasco, B. J.**, Freeman, M., Low, A., Kondo, K., Elven, C., Zakher, B., Motu'apuaka, M., Paynter, R., & **Kansagara, D.** (2017). Benefits and harms of plant-based cannabis for posttraumatic stress disorder: A systematic review. *Annals of internal medicine*. [Link](#).
- Sweeney, S. M., Hall, J. D., **Ono, S. S.**, Gordon, L., Cameron, D., Hemler, J., Solberg, L.I., Crabtree, B.F., & Cohen, D. J. (2017). Recruiting practices for change initiatives is hard: findings from EvidenceNOW. *American Journal of Medical Quality*. [Link](#).
- Quill, T. E., **Ganzini, L.**, Truog, R. D., & Pope, T. M. (2017). Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking Among Patients With Serious Advanced Illness—Clinical, Ethical, and Legal Aspects. *JAMA internal medicine*. [Link](#).
- Miranda, L. S.**, Datta, S., Melzer, A. C., Wiener, R. S., Davis, J. M., Tong, B. C., **Golden, S.E.**, & **Slatore, C. G.** (2017). Rationale and design of the lung cancer screening implementation. Evaluation of Patient-Centered Care Study. *Annals of the American Thoracic Society*. [Link](#).
- Sullivan, D. R., Ganzini, L.**, Lapidus, J. A., Hansen, L., Carney, P. A., Osborne, M. L., Fromme, E.K., Izumi, S., & **Slatore, C. G.** (2017). Improvements in hospice utilization among patients with advanced-stage lung cancer in an integrated health care system. *Cancer*. [Link](#).

- Sullivan, D. R., Golden, S. E., Ganzini, L., Wiener, R. S., Eden, K. B., & Slatore, C. G.** (2017). Association of Decision-Making with Patients' Perceptions of Care and Knowledge during Longitudinal Pulmonary Nodule Surveillance. *Annals of the American Thoracic Society*. [Link](#).
- Teo, A. R., Forsberg, C. W., Marsh, H. E., Saha, S., & Dobscha, S. K.** (2017). No-Show Rates When Phone Appointment Reminders Are Not Directly Delivered. *Psychiatric Services*. [Link](#).
- Teo, A. R., Marsh, H., Forsberg, C. W., Nicolaidis, C., Chen, J. I., Newsom, J., Saha, S., & Dobscha, S. K.** (2018). Loneliness is Closely Associated with Depression Outcomes and Suicidal Ideation Among Military Veterans in Primary Care. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. [Link](#).
- Triplette, M., Kross, E. K., Mann, B. A., Elmore, J. G., **Slatore, C. G.**, Shahrir, S., Romine P.E., Frederick P.D., & Crothers, K. (2018). An assessment of primary care and pulmonary provider perspectives on lung cancer screening. *Annals of the American Thoracic Society*. [Link](#).
- Tuepker, A., Newell, S., Nicolaidis, C., Reyes, M. E., González-Prats, M. C., Skaperdas, E., & Kansagara, D.** (2017). Veteran Patient Perspectives and Experiences During Implementation of a Patient-Centered Medical Home Model. *Journal of Patient Experience*. [Link](#).
- Vranas, K. C., Jopling, J. K., Sweeney, T. E., Ramsey, M. C., Milstein, A. S., **Slatore, C. G.**, Escobar, C.G., & Liu, V. X. (2017). Identifying distinct subgroups of ICU patients: a machine learning approach. *Critical care medicine*. [Link](#).
- Wyse, J. J.** (2018). Older Former Prisoners' Pathways to Sobriety. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 36(1), 32-53. [Link](#).
- Ziemba, J. B., Matlaga, B. R., & **Tessier, C. D.** (2017). Educational Resources for Resident Training in Quality Improvement: A National Survey of Urology Residency Program Directors. *Urology Practice*. [Link](#).
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