Primary health care physician's attitudes and experiences of interventions for cannabis use disorder

Melissa Norberg, Peter Gates, Paul Dillon & Jan Copeland

National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre, University of New South Wales, AUSTRALIA

1 Background

Australian surveys of those with cannabis use disorder (CUD) reveal that general medical practitioners (GPs) are the preferred source of treatment as they are seen as trust worthy and confidential. The aim of this survey was to ascertain the attitudes, knowledge, experiences and support needs of GPs when managing cannabis treatment seekers

2 Methods

A self completed survey of n=782 GPs (70%) and nurses (23%) from Sydney, Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Brisbane attending Australian professional development seminars

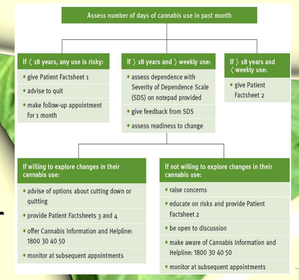


3 Results

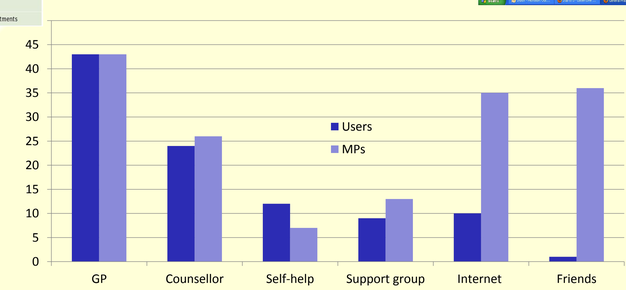
The majority of participants were female (80%) and GPs (70%). In their mean of 29 clinical hours per week they typically screened 4 individuals for cannabis use, delivered 2 interventions and made one referral. The majority felt that their training (88%), knowledge (59%), screening skills (64%) and management skills (77%) were unacceptably poor.

What prevents you from screening/treating those with CUD

- Don't want to attract users (12%)
- Not well enough supported (29%)
- Not worth the effort (18%)
- Not personal interest (16%)
- Don't have the skills (69%)
- Don't have time (41%)



4 Results 2.



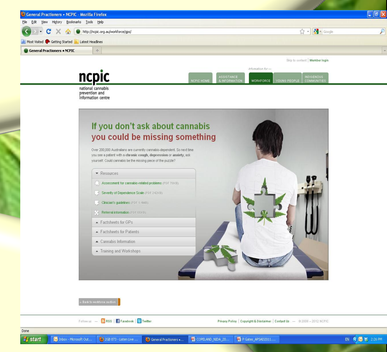
What would encourage you to screen/treat those with CUD?

- More training (83%)
- Guidelines & recommendations (78%)
- More resources (63%)
- More referral options (71%)
- Believing it to be important (29%)
- Believing that it works (45%)

5 Implications

There is a serious gap in the capacity of the primary health care workforce to address cannabis related problems in the community

- GPs are a popular & trusted source of assistance for those with CUD BUT.....
- Expectations of the GP are not high and users satisfaction with their assistance is low
- GPs do not feel sufficiently equipped or motivated to screen/treat those with CUD
- Evidence-based training that is web-based and provides CME points is likely to assist those who are motivated to access training, as is
  - Provision of downloadable resources and flowcharts



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