Beyond the Bud:

A Survey Study on Contamination Awareness, Experiences, and Perceptions Among Medical Cannabis Patients

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reddit
72K Members · 59 Online

r/Guiding Research

The PI's previous research was used to guide this study, which explored an online community on the social media site, Reddit, called r/FLMedicalTrees, and conducted interviews with Florida medical cannabis dispensary workers. The previous study included a social media analysis to look at medical cannabis product contamination and patients feelings towards the medical cannabis program. The below themes are the social media analysis and interview results.

THEMES ⌄

RQ1 ⌃
What were medical patients' and dispensary workers' experiences with contaminated products?
Patients and dispensary workers experienced multiple forms of contamination throughout different products from medical cannabis dispensaries.

RQ2 ⌃
What type of information did patients seek and share about medical cannabis contaminants?
Patients sought second opinions about potential contaminants, advice on safety of a possibly contaminated product, and how to return the product to dispensaries. Patients shared personal stories, similar experiences of contamination, and advice for those concerned about product quality or returning a product.

RQ3 ⌃
What were medical patients' and dispensary workers' feelings toward the current state of the medical cannabis program in Florida?
Dispensary management seemed to have specific rules to address contaminated products to protect profit, rather than patients.

RQ4 ⌃
According to dispensary workers, what practices did management use when contaminated products were discovered in stores?
Some patients expressed feelings of anxiety and worry about health, safety, and quality control, while others had a lack of concern. Dispensary workers valued access to medical cannabis yet expressed a need for patient education about contaminants and consistent product regulation for for-profit businesses.
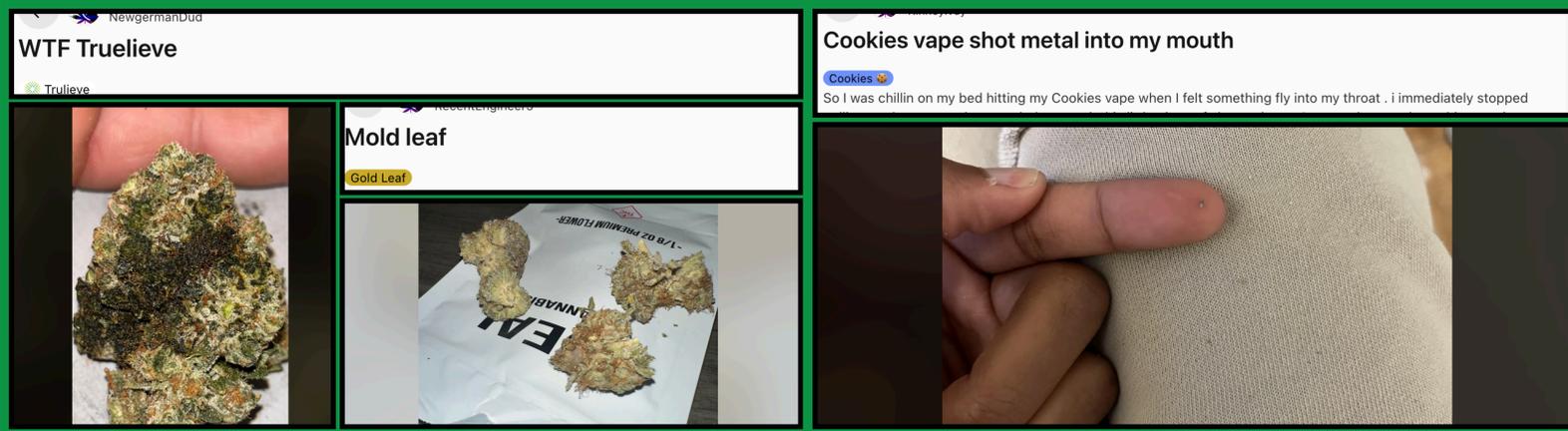
RQ5 ⌃
What changes do patients and dispensary workers recommend should be made to Florida's medical cannabis program?
Patients want changes regarding vertical integration, company accountability, state oversight, and home grow law. Medical dispensary employees want changes regarding quality control, product packaging, and vertical integration.

SCI LIT DIGITAL

SCAN ME!

WTF Truelieve
NewgermanDud
Trulieve

Mold leaf
Gold Leaf

Cookies vape shot metal into my mouth
Cookies 🍪
So I was chillin on my bed hitting my Cookies vape when I felt something fly into my throat . i immediately stopped

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"You ask if people would read things if they were produced by industry or the OMMU or a physician or IFAS.... But perhaps you might ask how much people trust certain sources of information about the products." ✓

"For the questions about positive and negative health outcomes, you may consider replacing the words "health outcomes" with "effects" so that the respondent can interpret this more generally." ✗

"I did not like the "ranking" question very much – might consider rephrasing as agree/disagree to each [with a "don't' know" option]." ✓

"Sometimes you only refer to "medication" and its not clear you mean marijuana/cannabis." ✓

"I don't think you ask if people have ever returned a product or tried to – - and if so what was their concern - and what happened (were they able to return it) and what was wrong with it." ✓

What changes to current policy and/or processes might decrease the possibility of medical cannabis products becoming contaminated? (Please rank these from most to least important)

allow patients to see their medication before they purchase it	1
removal of dispensary vertical integration requirement	2
increased oversight from the state government on dispensaries	3
greater care in the growth process	4
require fully indoor grow facilities	5
allow patient home grow	6
government secret shoppers visiting dispensaries regularly	7
increased product testing regulation	8
Other	9

Since I received a medical cannabis card, I have purchased medical cannabis I believed to be contaminated.

Never
Once
Twice
3 times
4 times
5 times
6 times
7 times
8 times
9 times
10 or more times
Back to preview mode

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree changes to the following policies and/or processes might decrease the possibility of medical cannabis products becoming contaminated.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Allow patients to see their medical cannabis products before they purchase them.	○	○	○	○	○
Removal of dispensary vertical integration requirement. (Vertical integration means a dispensary owns and controls all points in the supply chain of its products).	○	○	○	○	○
Increased oversight from the state government of dispensaries.	○	○	○	○	○
Greater care in the growth process.	○	○	○	○	○
Require fully indoor grow facilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Allow patient home grow.	○	○	○	○	○
Government secret shoppers visit dispensaries regularly.	○	○	○	○	○
Increased product testing regulation.	○	○	○	○	○

Since I received a medical cannabis card, I have purchased medical cannabis I believed to be contaminated.

Never
1-2 times
3-4 times
5-6 times
7-8 times
9-10 times
11 or more times

Introduction

The purpose of this pilot was to evaluate the items and concepts in my survey related to medical cannabis patients' knowledge and experience with contaminated medical cannabis products in the state of Florida, while also evaluating their perceptions of the current Florida medical cannabis program policies.

Research objectives (ROs):
1. Understand medical cannabis patients experience with contaminated medical cannabis products.
2. Determine medical cannabis patients knowledge level related to possible product contaminants.
3. Determine desired changes medical cannabis patients want made to the policy and structure of the medical cannabis program.
4. Explore medical cannabis patients trust in medical cannabis doctors and the medical cannabis program.

Pilot Design

- Conducted first week of March 2024
- Sent to 22 Florida medical cannabis patients and panel of 5 experts
- Experts included medical cannabis, public health, and policy researchers, as well as a medical cannabis doctor
- Pilot participants received a cover letter with pilot instructions and a link to the survey
- Instructions ask participants to consider clarity, readability, and content of the question stem, relevance of the answers provided, if they can properly answer the question, if questions appear in logical order, and how long the survey takes
- The final question of the survey was created to allow participants to provide feedback related to the instructions provided and anything they felt should be shared with the research team

Considerations

- Pilot participant feedback was complied into a single document for PI consideration
- PI went through each participants feedback individually to determine relevance to the study purpose and study scope
- Example text within questions and answers was made uniform (ex: vs. EX.)
- Certain question scales were changed from ranking to continuous
- Some answers to questions were changed from individual answers to ranges (1,2,3 to 1-2,3-4)
- Question language was altered (medication to medical cannabis)

Future Directions

After incorporation of relevant patient and expert feedback, the survey was sent via email to over 1,500 Florida medical cannabis patients during the first week of April 2024. More than 300 patient have responded to the survey and data will be analyzed during the summer. I plan to look at descriptive statistic and run correlations to make sense of the survey data.

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