



# cb2insights

## **CB2 HEALTH PULSE** SEPTEMBER 2020

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CB2 Health Pulse is a monthly publication that highlights data and interesting findings from a real-world data registry of over 100,000 patients in an integrative care setting focused on improving future health outcomes for patients.



## IN THIS EDITION

Alternative therapies – how else are our patients seeking to improve their health?

How does a patient's condition impact their use of alternative therapies?

Incorporating all treatments – at what cost?

## INTRODUCTION TO CB2 INSIGHTS

CB2 Insights owns and operates clinics in the United States that put the patient at the center of their health and wellness journey in an integrative care setting. We are proud to provide care to more than 100,000 patients on an annual basis.

CB2 Insights maintains a real-world data registry of patient health outcomes with the goal of improving patient care, providing individualized feedback, and generating insights for the medical and academic communities.

The objective of the CB2 Insights Health Pulse is to highlight data and interesting findings from the real-world data registry with a focus on improving future health outcomes for patients.

## KEEPING US HEALTHY

Humans are incredibly complex beings; our bodies are wired with so many defense mechanisms intent on keeping us alive and well - from our fight or flight response, to our immune response, it's like we have a small army working to protect us from harm. But despite our bodies' best efforts, genetic susceptibility, life experiences, lifestyle choices, accidents and exposure to harmful substances can disrupt our health, which is where the subsequent choices we make can help our internal defense mechanisms fight off unwanted illness, pain and suffering.

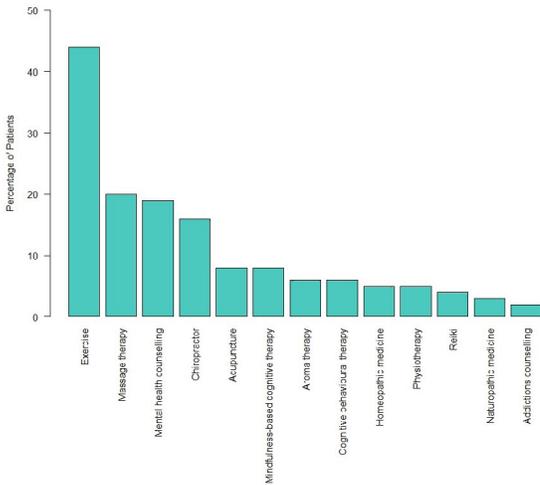
## THE USE OF ALTERNATE THERAPIES

Pharmaceutical medication is often the first-place people turn when something is wrong, whether it be an aching back, high blood pressure, or difficulty getting to sleep. Modern medicine is extremely advanced, and pharmaceutical companies have developed a fix in pill-form for almost everything, but the quick and easy solution isn't always best for everyone. Pharmaceutical treatments can come with side effects, high price tags and dependency issues, and although they may be the only option for certain conditions, others may be better managed with, or in combination with alternative therapies. There has been a recent upswing in the use of more natural treatments, potentially as a result of patient dissatisfaction with pharmaceutical treatments and the desire to treat ailments in a holistic way. This has been seen with wellness trends such as essential oils, meditation, veganism, and alternative therapies becoming more mainstream. In 2012, Americans spent over \$30 billion on alternative therapies, and globally the industry is expected to reach \$293 billion by 2027, highly driven by the use of dietary supplements and therapies such as yoga and acupuncture.

Alternative therapies range from exercise and chiropractic services to mental health counselling and acupuncture, and similar to cannabis, one therapy may benefit multiple conditions. For many conditions they may be suggested as an initial treatment option prior to considering pharmaceutical treatment. Among our patients, 60% report using at least one alternative therapy to help manage their condition(s):

- Patients with anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder or depression were most likely to report using an alternative therapy (68%)
- Patients with chronic pain and cancer-related pain were less likely to report using an alternative therapy than the average
- Females were much more likely to report the use of an alternative therapy than males – 67% compared to 56%
- Patient age did not impact use of an alternative therapy – older patients reported therapies as commonly as younger patients

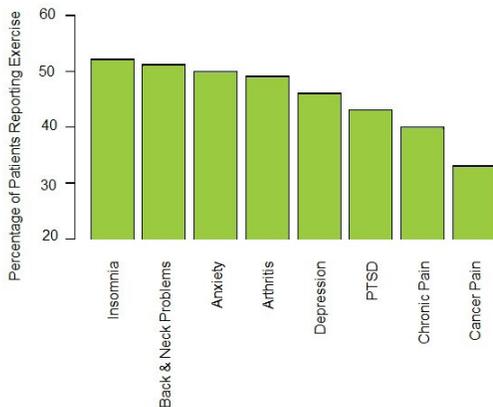
The following graph shows the proportion of patients reporting each alternative therapy at intake from a sample of over 70,000 patients seeking medical cannabis qualification at the CB2 Insights US clinics.



## THE NUMBER ONE THERAPY

Exercise is the most commonly reported alternative therapy by a landslide – with 44% of patients reporting it as a method of therapy for their condition. Females report exercising more than males – 47% compared to 41%. Over 50% of patients with anxiety, insomnia and back problems report using exercise as a therapy, whereas those with cancer related pain and chronic pain report it less often (33% and 40%, respectively). For comparison, in the general US population only 23% of patients are getting enough exercise, despite it having undeniable health benefits.

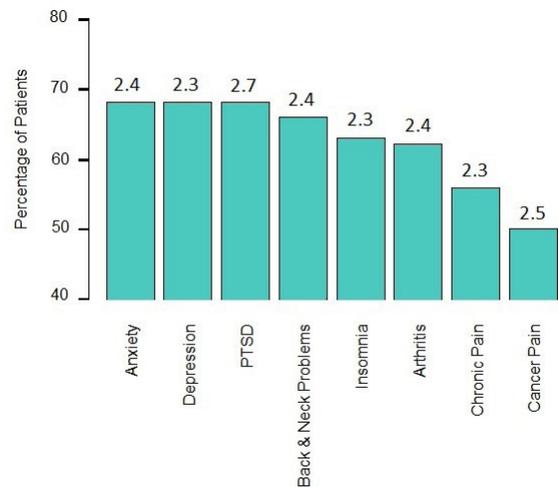
We wondered - is it common for medical cannabis patients to exercise more than the general population? Researchers have found that some cannabis users consume cannabis prior to exercising, citing that it increases enjoyment of exercise and the motivation to do so. These co-users tend to exercise more than the general population, and more than other cannabis users who do not consume cannabis prior to exercise. Could this be one of the reasons for this trend, or could these patients' practitioners be more encouraging of using exercise as a therapy for their conditions?



The previous graph shows the proportion of patients reporting exercise by the top 8 primary reported medical conditions from a sample of over 70,000 patients seeking medical cannabis qualification at the CB2 Insights US clinics

## HOW MUCH THERAPY IS ENOUGH?

Overall, 60% of patients reported using at least one alternative therapy, and the average among this group was 2.4 different therapies. Interestingly, despite a range in the proportion of patients reporting at least one therapy by condition, the average number of therapies patients reported using remained relatively steady, all between 2.3 and 2.7 therapies. Age also didn't have a significant impact on the number of therapies patients reported. However, consistent with similar trends comparing males and females, females reported a higher average number of therapies than males – 2.7 compared to 2.1. We have seen this trend a few times in our data recently: females reporting more therapies, more treatments for acute illnesses – is this truly because they aren't as healthy? Or is there something else to explain this difference between males and females?



The graph above shows the proportion of patients within each reported primary condition who reported using an alternative therapy at intake from a sample of over 70,000 patients seeking medical cannabis qualification at the CB2 Insights US clinics. The average number of therapies patients' reported by primary condition is noted above each bar.

## TRENDS IN MENTAL HEALTH

A surprising trend is seen among patients with the most frequently reported mental health concerns – anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder – many of these patients did not report current or past mental health counselling, cognitive behavioral therapy or mindfulness-based cognitive therapy as a treatment for their condition.

As it stands:

- 48% of patients with anxiety
- 33% of patients with depression
- 35% of patients with PTSD

did not report current or past counselling or other mental health therapy.

Some form of counselling or psychotherapy is often recommended as a treatment for mental health concerns, and it is surprising to note how many patients have not sought this form of therapy.

...which makes us wonder – why?

Is there still a stigma surrounding attending therapy, or could the steep cost of therapy deter individuals in need from seeking this route of treatment that could greatly benefit them? Why does taking care of our mental health have a stigma, and why does it need to be so expensive?

## TRENDS IN PAIN CONDITIONS

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Alternative therapies that may benefit pain conditions also seem to be largely underused. Only 56% of patients with chronic pain and 65% of patients with back and neck problems reported current or past use of acupuncture, chiropractor, massage therapy or physiotherapy. Again, we wonder if the cost of these therapies is a deterrent to patients who may benefit from them? What options are out there for patients to treat their conditions and symptoms holistically, focusing on an integrative approach rather than treating symptoms individually?

## UP NEXT: CB2 HEALTH PULSE

- There's not just one way to do it: How do patients consume medical cannabis?
  - Insights from the largest cannabis retrospective study to date
  - Deep Dive: Chronic Pain – it's the most commonly reported reason for using medical cannabis, but what are the experiences of these patients?
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### CB2 HEALTH PULSE

We will be releasing additional data and insights on a monthly basis.

### QUESTIONS?

Want to see something featured? Let us know!  
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