

Management of cannabis withdrawal and dependence

Jan Copeland

University of New South Wales, Australia

Public health costs of cannabis use and dependence include lower educational achievements, and poorer mental and physical health outcomes, as well as subtle cognitive deficits relating to attention and memory, as well as respiratory disorders. Given the status of cannabis as the world's most prevalent illicit drug of abuse, with an estimated 10 - 20% of users meeting dependence criteria, and a sharp increase in treatment seeking for cannabis use disorders over the last 10 years, identifying novel treatments to improve cannabis treatment outcomes is an important public health priority. A major clinical barrier to achieving effective cannabis treatment outcomes is the experience of withdrawal symptoms which often curtails client engagement in treatment sessions and precipitates relapse. This paper will provide an overview of the evidence-base for pharmacological and psycho-social interventions for cannabis withdrawal and dependence. It will include discussion of this group's research on the use of agonist medications such as Nabiximols (*Sativex*) for these conditions and our specialist motivational enhancement and cognitive-behavioural therapy-based interventions delivered via the web, the telephone and smart phone apps. These have all been previously, or are currently being, evaluated in randomised controlled trials. Future research directions will also be discussed.

Biography

Jan Copeland is the founding Director of the National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre at the University of New South Wales since 2007. She received her doctorate in 1995 and her Honours degree in Science (Psychology) in 1989. She is an Associate Editor of the College on Problems of Drug Dependence's (CPDD) journal *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* along with three other Editorial positions. She has 268 publications of which 126 articles have been published in peer-reviewed international journals. She is the lead author of the only clinical manual for the delivery of cannabis use disorder interventions. Her work has been supported by more than thirty six million dollars worth of research and related funding over the past 15 years. She is a member of the Australian Professional Society on Alcohol and Drugs (APSAD), The International Cannabinoid Research Society, International Society for Research on Internet Interventions, and is the Chair of CPDD's International Committee.

j.copeland@unsw.edu.au