

## ***Cannabis Self-medication in Cancer Patients: A Qualitative Probe***



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**BACKGROUND:** *The medical effects of cannabis have been known since ancient times. In oncology, hemp is primarily used to suppress nausea and vomiting during chemotherapy. Unlike in several other countries, treatment with cannabis is not legal in the Czech Republic. There are some cancer patients, however, who self-medicate with hemp. AIMS:* The aim of the research is to describe the issue of self-medication with cannabis from the perspective of cancer patients. The research areas are focused on motivation to use, the procurement of cannabis and possible related complications, the method of cannabis use, and the attitude towards the future use of cannabis. **METHODS:** *Open exploratory research, a qualitative probe, data collection by means of semi-structured interviews. SAMPLE:*

*Nomination using simple purposive sampling, two men (aged 24 and 35) diagnosed with cancer who use cannabis as self-medication. RESULTS:* The motivation for self-medication was to prevent loss of appetite and relieve mild states of depression, which were both achieved. The participants mostly grow hemp for their own use and occasionally buy from trusted sources; they are not afraid of legal problems in this respect. One of the participants has used cannabis in several ways, the other only smokes "joints". While one of the participants is already trying to limit his use of cannabis and to seek alternative treatment, the other has no plans to stop using it. **CONCLUSIONS:** The study provides evidence of self-medication with cannabis directly from cancer patients.

**KEY WORDS:** CANNABIS – THERAPEUTIC EFFECTS – SELF-MEDICATION – ONCOLOGY

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