



Five Years Later: Examining Nursing Implications Following Colorado's Controversial and Trend-Setting Marijuana Legislation

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Summary: This presentation included implications to nursing with the growing popularity of legalized medical and recreational marijuana across the United States.

Nursing Implications:

- Paradoxical effects of cannabis (or cannabinoid) hyperemesis syndrome, where chronic excessive use leads to nausea and vomiting (and can cause kidney injury).
- Patients get admitted to the hospital with their THC-containing product, potentially leaving floor nurses with liability and the burden of time-consuming policy inquiries.
- Potential pharmacologic interactions: patients may not report use to doctors, nurses, and pharmacists.
- Substantial increase in ER visits due to unintentional ingestion, over-ingestion, pediatric ingestion, motor vehicle, and other accidents.
- Social ideas and misleading marketing suggesting marijuana is a health-promoting product.

Key Takeaways:

- Effects of marijuana may be dose-dependent, though "dosing" is not regulated and lacks precision.
- New legislation has created much-needed opportunities for clinical trials to study beneficial and adverse effects.
- Potentially serious pharmacologic interactions exist with cannabis products and patients may not disclose use.
- Patients may be admitted with their THC-containing products and may use them while in the hospital, leaving nurses vulnerable and potentially masking neurological changes.

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