

PSYCHEDELIC RESEARCH SNAPSHOT



Medical Cannabis Use in a Residential Substance Use Recovery Program



MAPS
CANADA

Exploring cannabis as an adjunct in recovery


- Assess feasibility & acceptability of medical cannabis in residential care
- Evaluate impact on pain, mental health, sleep, cravings
- Capture experiences of clients and staff





Methods



- 
- 14 clients receiving medical cannabis
 - 7 staff providing support and feedback
 - Authorized via telemedicine
 - Administered oils, capsules, flower (max. 2g/day)
 - Weekly education
 - Interviewed at baseline, 1 mo, 3 mo.



Multimodal Improvements Reported

Pain Relief

93%
13/14

Sleep

100%
14/14

Mental Health

93%
13/14

Craving
Reduction

86%
12/14



Medication impact

Reduced reliance
on other drugs

79%

Adjusted or
reduced
prescriptions

Common
reductions:
methadone,
antidepressants

Used as a
substitute for
opioids, alcohol
stimulants

Medical
Cannabis



Challenges & friction points



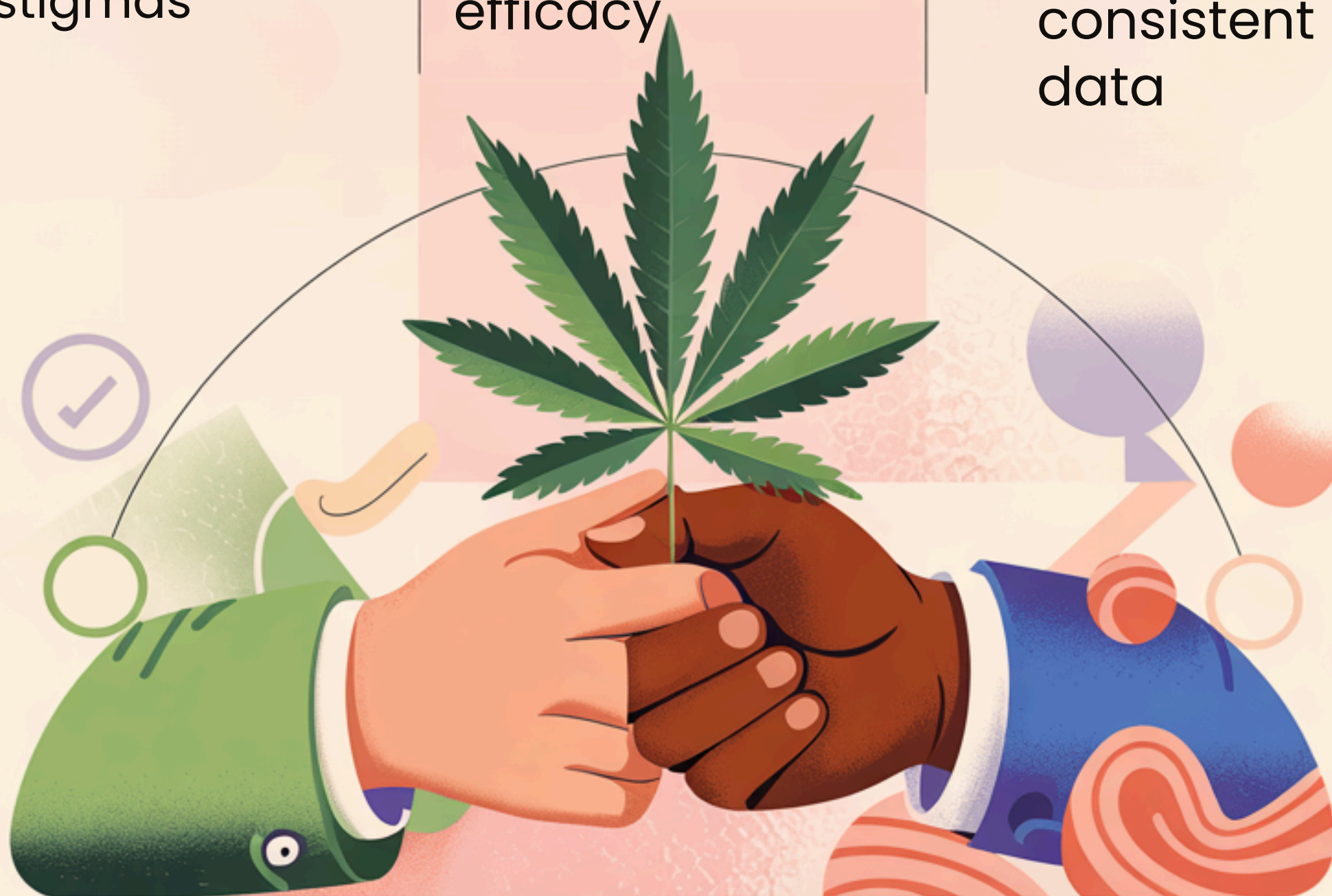
43%
Reported
stigmas



Staff skepticism
around medical
cannabis
efficacy



Program
variability
limited
consistent
data



CONCLUSIONS

Medical Cannabis shows promise in



Recovery Care

- Linked to pain, sleep and craving improvements
- Accepted by most clients and staff
- Requires staff training + anti-stigma efforts



WHY IT MATTERS

New model for addiction care

Supports harm reduction over abstinence



Aligns with real-world patterns of substance use

Offers options for treatment-resistant clients

Supports harm reduction over abstinence

Important Constraints to Note

- Small sample (n=14)
- No tracked cannabis dosage
- Possible positive bias in feedback
- Only 3-month follow-up





Citation

Medical Cannabis Use Adjunct to Standard of Care in a Residential Substance Use Recovery Program: A Pilot Study

Fehr, F.C., Lo, L.A., Nelson, C.C., Diehl, L., & Walsh, Z. (2025)

Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs.
Feb 10, 2025

Doi.15288/JSAD, 24-00224