



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

“Cannabis Usage for the Self-Management of Chronic Pelvic Pain: An Online Questionnaire.”

A study examining current cannabis-based self-management treatments being used by women to help ease chronic pelvic pain in the UK and the acceptability of using cannabidiol.

You are being invited to complete an anonymous questionnaire. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others, friends, relatives, and GP, if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to. Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Why are we doing the study?

This questionnaire is being conducted as part of a research study. Chronic pelvic pain (CPP) is pain felt in the lower tummy that lasts for three months or more. It is very common, affecting over 1 million women in the UK alone. The cause of the pain is usually unknown but can be due to gynaecological conditions such as endometriosis (where tissue similar to the lining of the womb grows outside of the womb) or non-gynaecological conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome.

Living with CPP can have a negative impact on women emotionally, socially, and financially, affecting their quality of life. Current treatment options are painkillers, hormonal treatment, and surgery. Women, healthcare professionals, and the UK government all agree we need more treatments to help women with CPP, especially ones that women can manage themselves. Many women try things like heat therapy, acupuncture, dietary changes, and cannabis-based products to help ease the pain.

Cannabidiol (CBD) comes from the cannabis plant but does not cause the sensation of feeling high. Women with CPP often use CBD oils and edibles to ease pain, experiencing very few side effects. Questionnaire studies in the United States, New Zealand, and Australia suggest that many women use cannabis-based treatments for pelvic pain and find them effective. However, we currently lack data on this from the UK.

This anonymous questionnaire will help us determine if women suffering from CPP in the UK are using cannabis-based treatments and whether these have helped their pain. We want to explore if they are open to trying CBD products to help with their pelvic pain. We will also gather data on other treatments they have tried or are currently using for CPP.

Why have I been chosen and do I have to take part?

We are looking for a total of 350 women over the age of 18 with pelvic pain for 3 months or more, living in the UK, to complete this anonymous questionnaire. It is entirely up to you whether or not to participate.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We do not expect you to receive any direct benefits from taking part in this study. However, your participation will improve our knowledge and contribute valuable information that can help research on treatments for pelvic pain.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

There are no disadvantages to taking part in this study, and it will have no impact on your health or treatment.

How will my information be kept confidential?

The information gathered from this questionnaire is completely anonymous and confidential. You will not be asked to provide any personally identifiable information, so it cannot be traced back to you. The information you provide will only be used for research purposes and will not be shared with anyone other than those directly involved in the study. By completing this questionnaire, you are automatically agreeing to participate in the study and provide consent for the anonymous and confidential use of your information for research purposes. The first question in the questionnaire will confirm your consent.

What will happen to the results of this study?

The results of the study will contribute to a research study. We will also present the findings at appropriate scientific meetings and journals.

What if I am unhappy or there is a problem?

We do not anticipate that there would be any problems during this questionnaire project but if you are unhappy, or there is a problem, feel free to let us know by contacting Aisha Anwar (Aisha.anwar@liverpool.ac.uk) and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Ethics and Integrity Office (research@liverpool.ac.uk), please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researchers involved and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

The University strives to maintain the highest standards of rigour in the processing of your data. However, if you have any concerns about the way in which the University processes your personal data, it is important that you are aware of your right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office by calling 0303 123 1113.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The University of Liverpool is the sponsor of this research and is conducting the research.

Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed for scientific content by members of the University of Liverpool for ethical considerations.

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

You should contact Aisha Anwar, email: Aisha.anwar@liverpool.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this information sheet.