



Pharmaceutical Sciences Seminar

Wednesday, October 6, 2021

4:00-5:00 pm

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“Cannabis for chronic pain – the long strange trip continues”

Presented by:



Bio: Dr. Kevin Boehnke PhD is a Research Investigator in the Department of Anesthesiology and the Chronic Pain and Fatigue Research Center. He is also a yoga instructor. His current research interests include cannabinoids, psychedelics, and self-management strategies for chronic pain.

Abstract: Cannabis is a Schedule I substance under federal law, designating it as a drug with no accepted medical uses, a high potential for abuse, and legal repercussions for use. In the past 25 years, however, thirty-six states in the US have legalized cannabis for medical use and 18 have legalized cannabis for adult use. This change has been influenced by the growing recognition of the cruel injustices of the War on Drugs, the escalating opioid epidemic, and excitement about cannabis therapeutics, particularly for chronic pain. In this interactive seminar, I will first briefly overview cannabis policy in the US and how has interacted with cannabis research. Next, I will share my journey into cannabis research. Then, I will discuss the major conclusions of my past projects, including: 1) showing that many people deliberately substitute cannabis and CBD for pain medications, 2) identifying chronic pain as the most common reason for using cannabis in the US, 3) providing guidance for physicians on cannabis use, and 4) characterizing naturalistic use to help design more effective clinical trials and cannabis policies. I will then discuss my ongoing, NIH-funded clinical trials that build on this body of research to investigate the therapeutic effects of cannabinoids on pain. Finally, I will finish by identifying open questions in the cannabis and pain research space. Participants in this seminar will walk away with a better understanding of cannabinoids and pain, ideas of how to work within the complexity of the cannabis research space, and strategies to effectively navigate barriers associated with cannabis research. I look forward to a vibrant and dynamic discussion with the audience throughout the presentation, so please arrive with an open and curious mind.

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