**An Evaluation of an Eight Week Group Treatment Programme Provided to Individuals Dependent on Cannabis**

**Author:** Campbell, Mark.

**Affiliations:** Limerick Drug & Alcohol Treatment Service, Health Service Executive (HSE)

Mid West, Ireland

**Background and aims**

Cannabis is by far the most widely used illicit drug in Ireland (NACD, 2011).1 Among recent cannabis users 9% were classified as cannabis dependent and 17% met criteria for cannabis abuse (NACD, 2013).2 The aim of the treatment programme was to enable participants to reduce their dependency on cannabis.

**Methodology**

The treatment intervention consisted of one assessment session followed by eight group sessions delivered weekly to individuals dependent on cannabis. The content of the assessment undertaken was taken from the Adolescent Cannabis Check Up (ACCU) baseline assessment (Martin et al., 2005).3 The content of the treatment programme was taken from the manual Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET) & Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for Adolescent Cannabis Users Volume 1, (Sampl & Kadden, 2001)4 and Volume 2 (Webb et al., 2001).5 A ‘Readiness to Change’ questionnaire (NCPIC, 2009)6 and a ‘Severity of Dependence’ (SOD) questionnaire (Gossop et al., 1995)7 were completed with participants at assessment and with those who completed treatment.

**Results**

Motivation to reduce use of cannabis was increased on completion of treatment.

Participants considered their dependency greater on completion of treatment despite a self reported reduction in cannabis use.

**Conclusions**

The treatment programme was an effective means of retaining clients in treatment and increasing motivation to reduce or stop cannabis use.

The increased knowledge gained by engaging in the programme altered participants perception of their severity of dependence. They acknowledged that their dependence was greater than they originally believed.

**Correspondence:** Mark Campbell, [markt.campbell@hse.ie](mailto:markt.campbell@hse.ie) 00353656865857

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