

Medical Marijuana Education of Graduate Health Care Students at The University of Findlay

Elijah Deskins, Kameron Early, Oscar Freyre, Chandra Sekar Ph.D., Rph.

Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, College of Pharmacy, University of Findlay

ABSTRACT

Healthcare knowledge is continually evolving. As an institution primarily concerned with providing its student with up-to-date information and education, it is vital to keep pace with updated policies, procedures, and laws. Our survey seeks to identify potential gaps that exist in education regarding new policies concerning medicinal marijuana. Without proper education, healthcare professionals will fail to provide correct information to patients about medical marijuana. This study will identify the current knowledge base of the University of Findlay's healthcare graduate students on the topic of medical marijuana, and demonstrate whether further education may be necessary.

INTRODUCTION

A survey analysis of graduate students at the University of Findlay was utilized to extrapolate levels of education on the subject matter of medicinal marijuana. Federally, marijuana is classified as a schedule I substance by the Drug Enforcement Agency and is not FDA approved for medicinal purposes.^{1,2} However, the state of Ohio has implemented a medical marijuana policy with 21 approved indications for medicinal use.³ An analysis of graduate students and their ability to identify these approved indications and legality of marijuana may illustrate the current level of education of University of Findlay students. Therefore, although there is a discrepancy between state and federal laws, appropriate medicinal marijuana education should be provided to healthcare students in order to equip them with proper information on this subject matter.

METHODOLOGY

This survey represents an exploratory, observational, cross-sectional study attempting to determine whether further education is needed on medical marijuana for health science students at The University of Findlay. A 7 question survey was sent out to senior and graduate status students in applicable health science fields at The University of Findlay. This included 153 pharmacy students, 216 physical therapy students, and 120 occupational therapy students. The survey was opened for responses on February 7, 2020 and closed March 7, 2020. Questions revolved around candidate's opinions on the impact of their practice on medical marijuana patients, medical marijuana legalization, and need for education on medical marijuana at The University of Findlay. Demographic information such as grade status and profession was collected at the beginning of the survey. A final question was provided at the end of the survey asking candidates to identify the 21 approved indications for medical marijuana use in Ohio. This was used to rank education status of UF students on medical marijuana in comparison to the responses on previous questions from the survey. For questions requiring subjective and potentially varied responses, 5 different graded response options were provided. Graded responses included an average option of "possibly", below average or "probably not", far below average or "definitely not", and appropriate inverse options. Only one question's responses used wording of "average" while the only other two questions with graded responses used "possibly" based answers as detailed before.

RESULTS

173 students completed the survey with 59 respondents being pharmacy students making up 34.1% of the total and creating a 39% response rate for the profession. 51 (29.5%) respondents were physical therapy students creating a respective response rate of 24% and 63 (37%) respondents were occupational therapy students (response rate of 53%). 29 students were seniors (16.8%) and 144 were graduate status students (83.2%). For the first question, 84 participants (48.6%) responded "definitely" that their profession could impact medical marijuana patients. 49 (28.3%) answered "probably," 34 (19.7%) answered "possibly," and only 6 students (3.47%) responded with "probably not" or "definitely not."

146 participants (84.4%) agreed with the legalization of medical marijuana while 27 (15.6%) did not. 63 students (36.6%) "definitely" thought a course/lecture on medicinal marijuana should be included in their curriculum at UF. 54 (31.4%) participants answered "probably," 36 (20.9%) answered "possibly," 15 (8.7%) answered "probably not," and 4 (2.3%) answered "definitely not." It should be noted that 1 participant skipped this question making the total responses 172 for this question alone. Upon being asked how educated they felt about medical marijuana, 2 respondents (1.2%) answered "far above average." 26 participants (15%) thought their education was "above average," 55 (31.8%) responded with "average," 79 (45.7%) answered "below average," and 11 (6.4%) answered "far below average." For the final question inquiring about the 21 approved indications for medical marijuana in Ohio, 2 respondents skipped the question creating a total of 171 responses for this question. The average score was 8.3 out of the 21 indications for all 171 respondents (40% score).

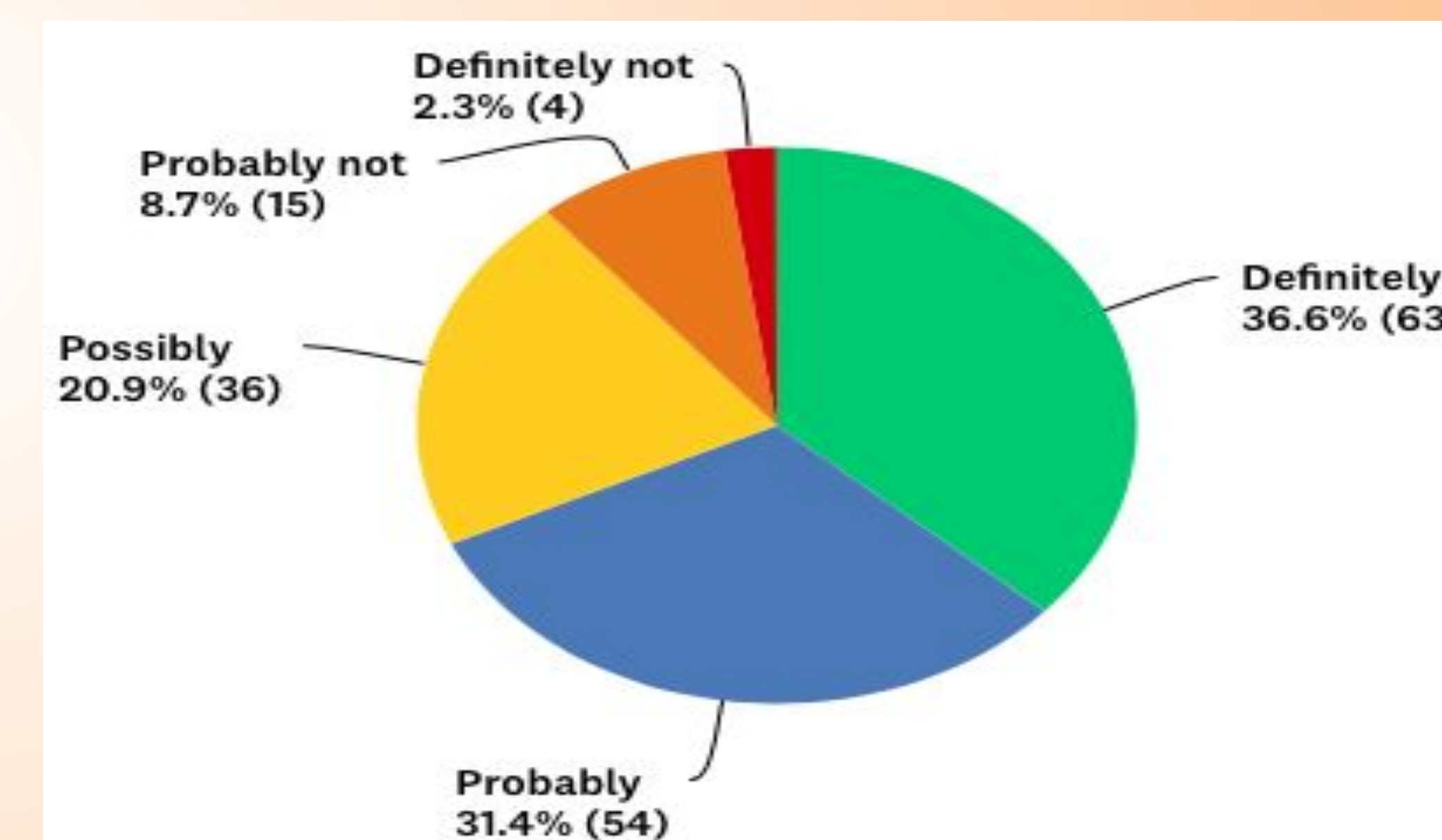


Fig 1: Need for course/lecture in curriculum at UF

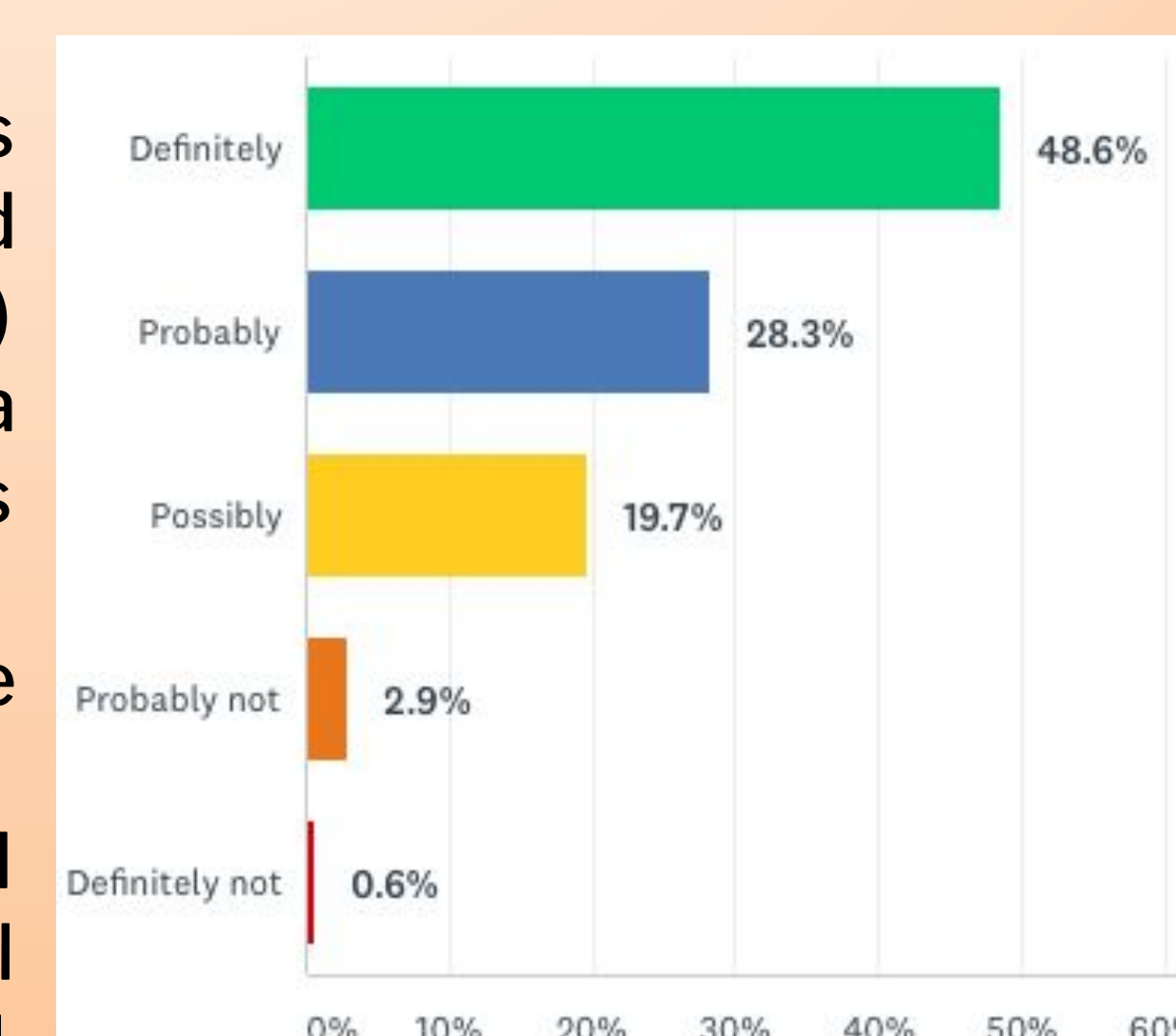


Fig 2: Impact of Profession on Medical Marijuana Patients

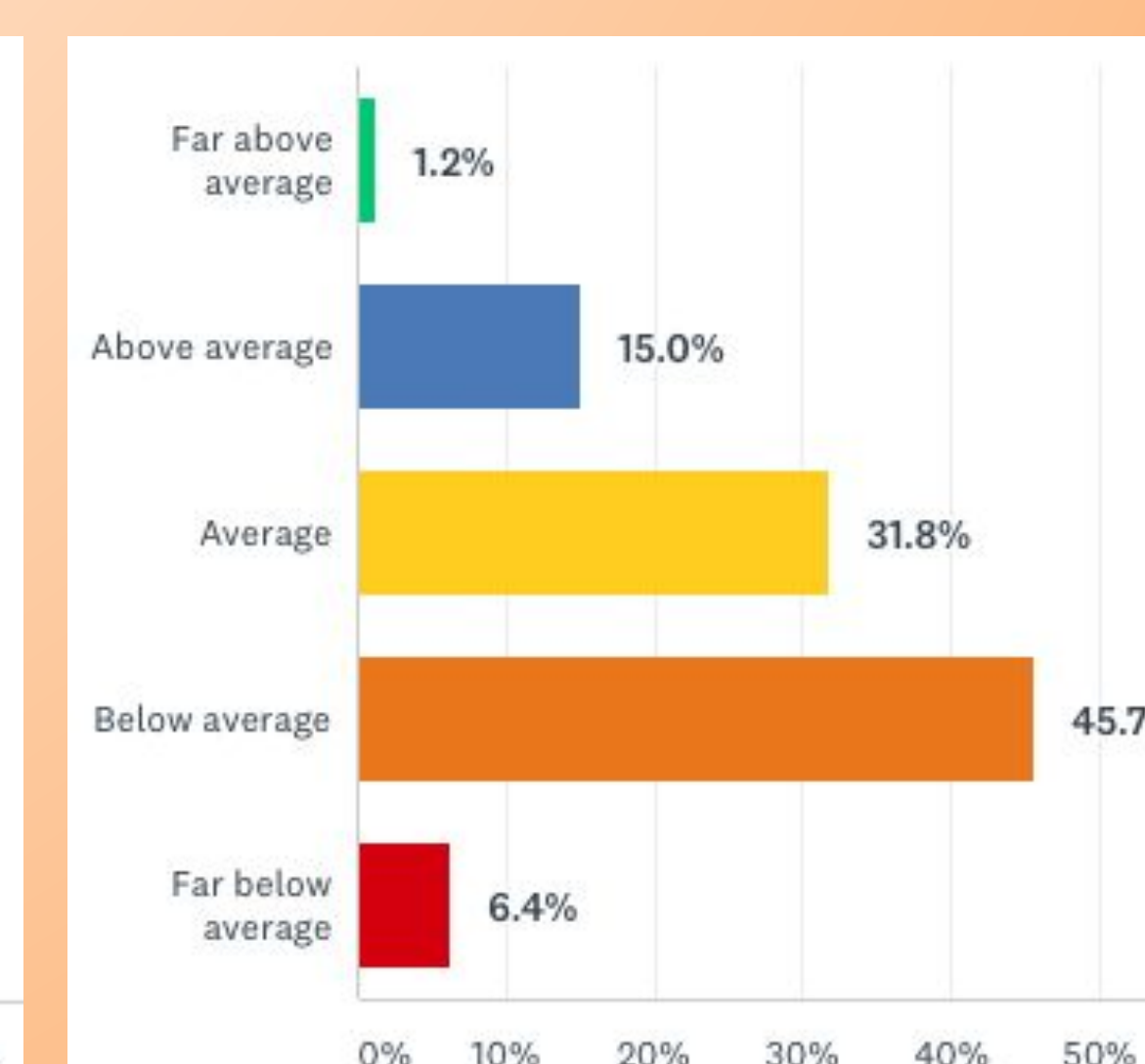


Fig 3: How Educated Participants feel about Medical Marijuana

CONCLUSIONS

When students at UF were asked if they think their profession will impact medical marijuana patients in the future, almost 50% (48.6%) selected a response of "definitely." This shows that participants think medical marijuana may be applicable in their respective healthcare field. When asked how educated they currently felt about medical marijuana, the majority of student participants answered with either average or below average. Only 16% answered above or far above average. This shows a need for more education on medical marijuana. In response to whether participants thought education on medical marijuana at UF was necessary in their respective curriculum, the majority (68%) answered with a response of definitely or probably (36.6%, 31.4%). This shows that further lectures on medical marijuana would be a welcomed addition to the curriculum for most students. The average participant only scored a 40% when asked to select all of the correct indications for medical marijuana. This shows that more education on medical marijuana is needed. Currently, an elective course on medical marijuana is available to pharmacy students and has been for a few years prior to 2020. Despite this, the percentage of students feeling and scoring appropriately on the topic is severely lacking. With the vast majority of participants believing that their profession will likely impact medical marijuana patients in the future, it is necessary that the various health programs within the college of health sciences at UF rethink the implementation of further education throughout their respective curriculums.

REFERENCES

1. Cannabis [Internet]. DEA. 2020 [cited 2020 Apr 20]. Available from: <https://www.dea.gov/taxonomy/term/336>
2. FDA Regulation of Cannabis and Cannabis Derived Products, Including Cannabidiol (CBD) [Internet]. FDA 2020. [cited 2020 Apr 20]. Available from: <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/public-health-focus/fda-regulation-cannabis-and-cannabis-derived-products-including-cannabidiol-cbd>
3. Medical Marijuana Control Program [Internet]. Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program. [cited 2020 Apr 20] Available from: <https://www.medicalmarijuana.ohio.gov/>