

### Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a central nervous system disorder characterized by uncontrollable twitching of the arms or legs and/or seizures. One in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy during their lifetime, according to statistics published by The Epilepsy Foundation. Conventional treatment to mitigate symptoms of this disorder includes medications or sometimes surgery.

Despite anecdotal reports of cannabis alleviating epileptic symptoms, clinical data establishing cannabinoids efficacy for this condition in adults is not at this time well documented.[1] However, in recent years, clinicians have begun to focus specifically on the ability of cannabidiol to potentially mitigate symptoms associated with intractable pediatric epilepsy after several case reports attracted prominent mainstream media attention.[2] Parents of children with severe epilepsy also report in online surveys successful experiences with cannabidiol-enriched cannabis.[3]

In the fall of 2013, the United States Food and Drug Administration granted orphan drug status to imported, pharmaceutically standardized CBD extracts for use in experimental pediatric treatment. Clinical trials assessing the safety and efficacy of the treatment in children with severe forms of the disease, such as Dravet syndrome, are slated to begin in 2014.[4]

#### REFERENCES

[1] Editorial. 2012. Marijuana for epilepsy: winds of change. *Epilepsy & Behavior* 29: 435-436

[2] Saundra Young, CNN.com. August 7, 2013. "Marijuana stops child's severe seizures."

[3] Porter and Jacobson. 2013. Report of a parent survey of cannabidiol-enriched cannabis use in pediatric treatment-resistant epilepsy. *Epilepsy & Behavior* 29: 574-577.

[4] Susan Livio, New Jersey Star-Ledger. December 6, 2013. FDA-approved medical marijuana clinical trial gets underway next month for kids with epilepsy.