

Course #21

HOPE & HEALING

The Case for Cannabis

For all who hope to heal

PART IV: HEALING

9 of 9 Courses
Within This Theme



{ 9 } MS AND
CHRONIC MUSCLE
SPASMS

“I had severe excruciating pain from muscle spasms, but the muscles themselves aren’t to blame. It’s coming from damage on my spine and the muscle relaxers and pain pills go right to the muscle itself. Cannabis reduces inflammation, slowing down the disease activity and calming your entire system. It truly saved my life when my doctor ran out of answers. My miracle plant.”

—CAROLYN KAUFMAN
Cannabis Patient



THE HUMAN CENTRAL NERVOUS system (CNS) is comprised of the brain and spinal cord. Nerve fibers (called *axons*) are normally protected by *myelin*, a fatty layer of insulation that allows nerve signals to be conducted properly. With multiple sclerosis, immune cells become overactive and damage the myelin sheathing, which results in loss of myelin along with damage to the nerve fibers. Where there is damage there eventually forms lesions or plaque and hardened scar tissue called *sclerosis*. And where the sclerosis occurs there is a loss of the nerve's ability to communicate throughout the body. Signals from the brain along the spinal cord to various parts of the body get stopped or distorted.

While no two people will have the same exact condition with MS, there are common symptoms that patients often have to live with, including:

- Fatigue
- Problems walking
- Tingling or numbness
- Involuntary muscle spasms, especially in the legs
- Stiffness
- Weakness
- Problems with vision
- Dizziness
- Bladder problems
- Sexual problems
- Constipation
- Pain
- Depression and mood swings
- Speech problems
- Problems swallowing
- Uncontrollable shaking

- Seizures
- Problems breathing
- Itchiness
- Headaches
- Loss of hearing

WHAT ARE TRADITIONAL TREATMENTS AND SIDE-EFFECTS?

There is no known cause for MS, although doctors tend to believe there are a combination of factors that lead to it, including immune system causes, viral and other infections, environmental causes, and genetic causes. While anyone can apparently get MS, it is more common in women than men by a ratio of 3:1, and it is more common in Caucasians than in Hispanics and African Americans, and it is in fact pretty rare in Asians. The most common age range when people seem to receive the diagnosis when they do lies between 20 and 40 years of age. The risk does seem to be higher for those who have family members who also have MS. And in the United States there are over one million people living with MS today.

Treatment, then, focuses mainly on recovery from attacks, slowing the progression of the disease, and managing symptoms. (In the very mildest forms of MS treatment might not be undertaken at all.) For treating attacks of MS, oral medications or intravenous infusions of *corticosteroids* may be employed, to reduce inflammation of the nerves. Side-effects include:

- Insomnia

- Raised blood pressure
- Mood swings

Or one may have one's plasma removed from one's blood and replaced by a protein solution. This method is normally undertaken when steroids have been ineffective.

Otherwise, depending on the type and severity, there exists a long list of medications used to manage symptoms and progression of MS, but there are usually as long a list of side-effects:

- Flu-like symptoms
- Low blood pressure
- Fever
- Nausea
- Increased risk of cancer
- Diarrhea
- Headaches
- Blurred vision

Other than medications, people do undergo physical therapy or take muscle relaxants, and of course, there is hope with medical cannabis for relief today as well. For MS patients, cannabis can have significant anti-inflammatory, antioxidative, antiemetic, antipsychotic, and neuroprotective effects. Further, the CBD component seems to help MS patients reduce pain, fatigue, and spasticity, and improve their mobility. In fact about 77 percent of those studied stated they felt cannabis was helpful in their management of MS symptoms, and the reported no side-effects from its use. Seventy percent stated their quality of life had improved with medical cannabis and stated as well that they were able to reduce their use of other medications.

HOW DOES MEDICAL CANNABIS WORK FOR MS AND CHRONIC MUSCLE SPASMS?

Research is starting to bear out that cannabis can have positive results with a patient's pain and spasticity when they have MS.

My Experience

“Chronic muscle spasms” was one of the original diagnoses specified as okay for cannabis by Florida law. I have patients who have muscle spasms because of multiple back injuries, auto accidents, or chronic muscle spasms due to multiple sclerosis, for example, where they've gotten extremely phenomenal results to where they are able to walk. Same thing with cerebral palsy, that's another condition that causes severe muscle spasms, where they are finally able to walk and move around due to medicinal cannabis. Under this umbrella we might include cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis. Chronic, non-malignant pain due to back injuries, herniated discs, back surgery, these can all fall under this heading of chronic muscle spasms as well. Also, movement disorders like Huntington's Disease, these would fall under the muscle spasms arena as well.

Case Study

Carolyn Kaufman is an MS advocate who was first diagnosed with MS in 2009, and she believes cannabis has made all the difference for her. Like others cited in this

book, she too exhausted all other traditional avenues before finally arriving at medical cannabis and other all-natural approaches to improve her condition. She details her journey—and her loss of 150 pounds—on her weblog, www.withouttheweight.com. But when it comes to her incorporating medical cannabis into her program, states, “When the pain was severe, cannabis was my gift from the earth. It worked when nothing else would. After never smoking before, I used cannabis to come off of all of my symptom management medications.”

“Marijuana clearly has medicinal value. Thousands of seriously ill Americans have been able to determine that for themselves, albeit illegally. Like my own family, these individuals did not wish to break the law, but they had no other choice. The numerous attempts to legitimately resolve the issue-via state legislation and federal administrative hearings-have too often been ignored or thwarted by misguided federal agencies. Several states conducted extensive, and expensive, research programs which demonstrated marijuana’s medical utility-particularly in the treatment of chemotherapy side-effects. Francis L. Young, the chief administrative law judge of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, ruled marijuana has legitimate medical applications and should be available to doctors.”

—LYN NOFZIGER

Former Press Secretary to Ronald Reagan

Forward in 1999 book, *Marijuana RX: The Patients’ Fight for Medicinal Pot*, by Robert C. Randall and Alice M. O’Leary

This completes Course #21

ABOUT Dr. Joe

Dr. Joseph Rosado



AFTER SPENDING SEVERAL YEARS in central Florida working as an orderly and then an EMT/Paramedic, Dr. Rosado realized his passion for the medical profession. He started chiropractic school at Life College in Marietta, Georgia, where he graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in clinical nutrition and a Doctor of Chiropractic degree. After practicing for several years, he went on to Universidad Central del Este, in San Pedro de Macoris where in 2001 he graduated summa cum laude with his medical degree. After working as physician and clinic Director in Salt Lake City, UT, team physician for the Costa Rican Institute of Recreation and Sports, and staff physician at Hospital Metropolitano in San Juan, PR, Dr. Rosado relocated back to Florida. In 2005 Dr. Rosado completed his MBA in

Health Care Management from University of Phoenix, magna cum laude. Once back in Florida, he worked as the Director of the Communicable Disease Division/Epidemiology and immunization departments as well as the Sr. Lead Physician at St. Johns County Health Department.

Dr. Rosado then moved on to Tricounty Hospital in Williston, FL to be the medical director, and also worked in a private practice with the Institute of Medical and Cardiovascular Excellence (IME/ICE) in Williston and The Villages providing primary and functional/regenerative care. Upon resigning from both Tricounty Hospital and ICE, he worked as a temporary (Locum Tenens) physician at the North FL Evaluation and Treatment Center in Gainesville, FL, Pinellas County Jail in Clearwater, FL, Escambia County Jail in Pensacola, FL, Florida Health Source in Pierson/Deland/Deltona, FL.

Presently, Dr. Rosado is the Medical Director at Coastal Wellness Centers in Ormond Beach, FL and is providing Therapeutic Cannabis (Medical Marijuana) recommendations and Suboxone Therapy; and volunteers once a month at Shepherd's Hope Community Clinic, in Longwood, FL.

He was on the bureau of speakers for the United For Care (Amendment 2) campaign in 2014 and 2016 and in 2015 Dr. Rosado took both the Florida Physicians Cannabis Course and the Florida Cannabis Medical Directors Course. In August of 2016, he was the first to recommend high-CBD/low-THC in the greater Central Florida region to an adult patient with Stage 3 brain cancer and in November of 2016, he was the first to recommend medical cannabis (THC:CBD 1:1), in the state of FL, to a pediatric patient, who was terminally ill. To date, he has worked with over 2,000 patients for the evaluation, recommendation and management of medical cannabis.