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Neuropathic orofacial pain: cannabinoids as a therapeutic avenue.

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Author information

Abstract

Neuropathic orofacial pain (NOP) exists in several forms including pathologies such as burning mouth syndrome (BMS), persistent idiopathic facial pain (PIFP), trigeminal neuralgia (TN) and postherpetic neuralgia (PHN). BMS and PIFP are classically diagnosed by excluding other facial pain syndromes. TN and PHN are most often diagnosed based on a typical history and presenting pain characteristics. The pathophysiology of some of these conditions is still unclear and hence treatment options tend to vary and include a wide variety of treatments including cognitive behaviour therapy, anti-depressants, anti-convulsants and opioids; however such treatments often have limited efficacy with a great amount of inter-patient variability and poorly tolerated side effects. Analgesia is one the principal therapeutic targets of the cannabinoid system and many studies have demonstrated the efficacy of cannabinoid compounds in the treatment of neuropathic pain. This review will investigate the potential use of cannabinoids in the treatment of symptoms associated with NOP.

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KEYWORDS: Burning mouth syndrome; Cannabinoids; Neuropathic orofacial pain; Persistent idiopathic facial pain; Trigeminal neuralgia

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