Australian Cannabis Nurses Association (ACNA)

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> "Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses …
>
> we must be learning all of our lives."
>
> Florence Nightingale | 1859

Preface

The discovery of the Endocannabinoid System (ECS) in 1988 has led to a growing body of worldwide scientific research and evidence about the cannabis plant.[1]

Nurses play primary and diverse roles in the Australian health care system and the ACNA recognises that more and more Australian nurses are interested in learning about the endocannabinoid system and the treatment modalities that are available for it. The ACNA believes it is critical to provide Australian nurses with education, leadership and practice pathways for endocannabinoid nursing.

Medicinal cannabis nursing is described as a specialty practice focused on care of patients seeking education and guidance in the therapeutic use of medicinal cannabis.[2] Medicinal cannabis nurses are competent nurses with knowledge of the human endocannabinoid system. Medicinal cannabis nurses provide for the safe and effective use of products containing medicinal cannabis and cannabinoids when managing the process of supporting the patient's potential endocannabinoid system upregulation and homeostasis, through assessment, evaluation and education. More importantly, medicinal cannabis nurses use a holistic approach which incorporates such elements as exercise, dietary and lifestyle changes, and modalities that are known to support healing, optimal homeostasis and well-being into the delivery of care.[3] The medicinal cannabis nurse applies their nursing education and knowledge of evidence-based research to educate, care, reduce harm and guide patients, caregivers, family members and other healthcare providers in the use of botanical cannabis and cannabis therapeutics.[4]

The medicinal cannabis nurse's focus is to provide safe, high-quality nursing care, education and guidance involving cannabis therapeutics and to support and encourage patients to participate in their healing and wellness care planning and to decrease the societal stigma associated with medicinal cannabis. Medicinal cannabis nursing requires nurses to integrate foundational nursing competencies and cannabinoid science into their nursing practice.[4] Knowledge of the endocannabinoid system, cannabinoids, flavonoids, terpenoids, cannabis laboratory testing requirements, cannabis therapeutics, potential drug-drug medication interactions, adverse effects, risks and benefits, evidence-based practice, advocacy, ethics, and the law are examples of advanced capabilities required within the medicinal cannabis nursing specialty.[4,5] In addition, the medicinal cannabis nurse is aware of the implications of the chronic use of cannabinoids and the potential this has on the possible downregulation of the individual's ECS. Instead, the medicinal cannabis nurse steers the patient towards optimising the function of their ECS through the prudent use of cannabinoid products and the incorporation of holistic modalities known to support homeostasis and their well-being. [5,6]

References

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