



CBD and Scan-Related Anxiety in Advanced Breast Cancer

Medical scans can be a major source of anxiety for people living with cancer, particularly when the scan may reveal whether a disease has progressed.

A randomized, double-masked phase II clinical trial studied 50 women with advanced breast cancer and clinical anxiety. Participants received either a single 400 mg dose of pharmaceutical-grade CBD or placebo before a scan assessing tumor burden.

The study did not meet its primary endpoint: the change in the prespecified anxiety measure was not significantly different between CBD and placebo. However, 2–4 hours after treatment, anxiety levels were significantly lower in the CBD group than in the placebo group. No grade 3 or 4 toxic effects were reported.

Potential application

This is an intriguing clinical signal rather than proof that CBD treats cancer-related anxiety. It suggests that acute situational anxiety in oncology may be worth investigating in larger trials, while also showing why primary and secondary outcomes need to be distinguished carefully.

Reference

Nayak MM, Chai P, Catalano PJ, et al. Cannabidiol for scan-related anxiety in women with advanced breast cancer: a randomized clinical trial. *JAMA Network Open*. 2024;7(12):e2450391.

Dr. Peter Verdegem, Ph.D., MBA

