

# Lack of Guidelines for Medicinal Cannabis

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# Conflict of Interests

We have no conflicts of interest, but we will discuss “off-label” use of Smoked Cannabis, which is commercially available, but we have no financial relationships to disclose.

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# Study Questions

1. What resources are available to guide patients and clinicians in the use of medical cannabis?
2. Have medical societies or government agencies created formal guidelines for medical use of cannabis?
3. Are existing cannabis guidelines evidence-based?



# Guidelines and Guidance

- \* A guideline tries to inform decisions and criteria regarding diagnosis, management, and treatment.
- \* Medical guidelines should be based on an evaluation of current evidence, not on authority of opinion.
- \* Guidance/Guidelines are more important where there is uncertainty or controversy.

# HIV-associated Neuropathy

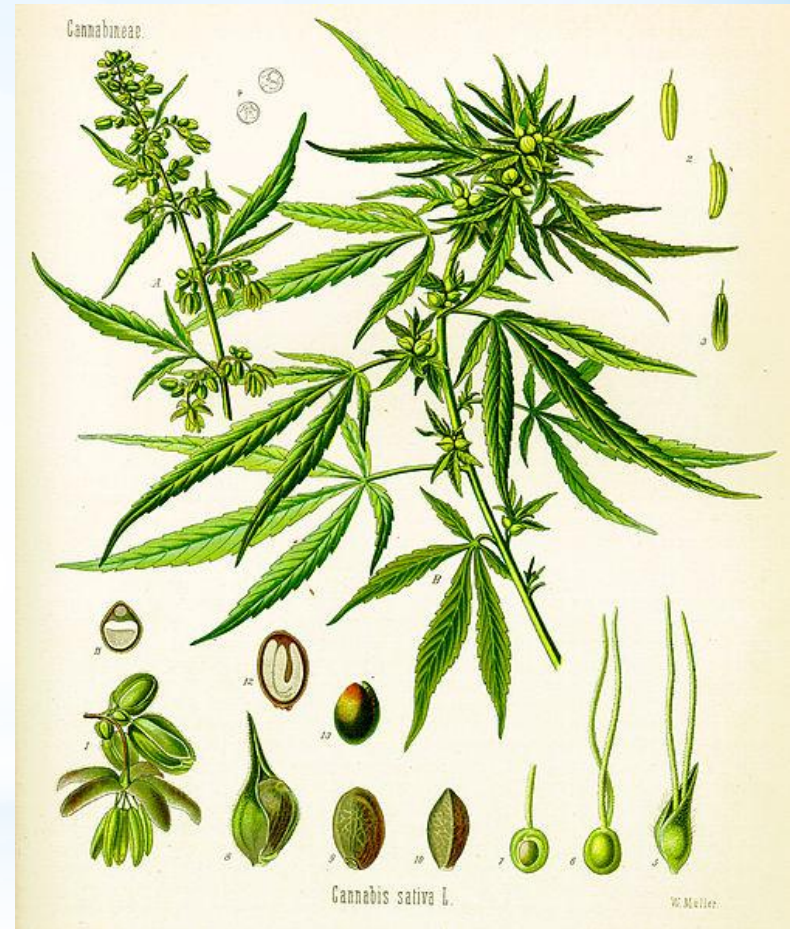
- \* Causes pain, burning, tingling, and numbness in the toes and feet
- \* Can be caused by the HIV virus itself or by anti-retroviral medications
- \* Affects 30-40% of HIV-infected individuals
- \* Current treatments are unsatisfactory



# Cannabis for Chronic Neuropathy

Systematic reviews and meta-analyses of several RCT's suggest that smoked cannabis is effective for chronic neuropathic pain.

**Smoked Cannabis may be suitable for patient centered self-titrated pain management in resource poor settings**



# Controversy calls for Guidance

Cannabis, while legalized in some U.S. states, remains illegal as a schedule I drug; its legal status is variably enforced worldwide.

*Does any guidance exist for clinicians and patients on the safe and effective use of medical cannabis?*

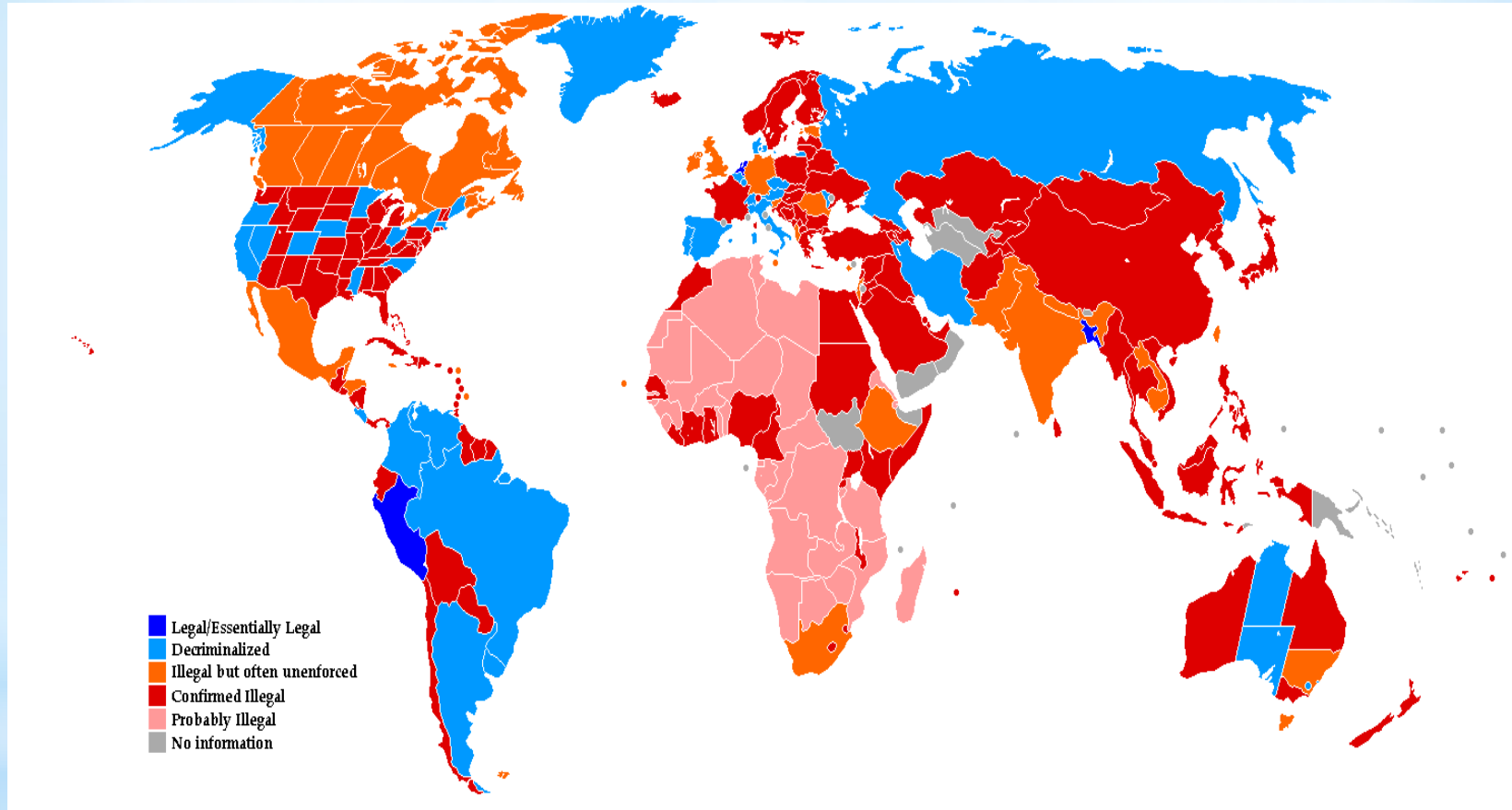
Our study aimed to evaluate the availability and quality of clinical guidance on the use of medical cannabis.

# Methods

- \* Conducted a comprehensive web-based search to determine the legal status of medical cannabis worldwide and to identify guidelines or guidance by governmental or professional organizations or informal sources.
- \* Searched for formal guidelines, statements or any guidance in traditional portals such as PubMed, as well as Google
- \* Searched for guidelines from government regulatory agencies and medical associations
- \* Explored the guideline development process and probed conflicts of interest of the stakeholders involved
- \* Examined whether the guidance or information provided is evidence-based, using as a litmus test the recommendations on neuropathic pain

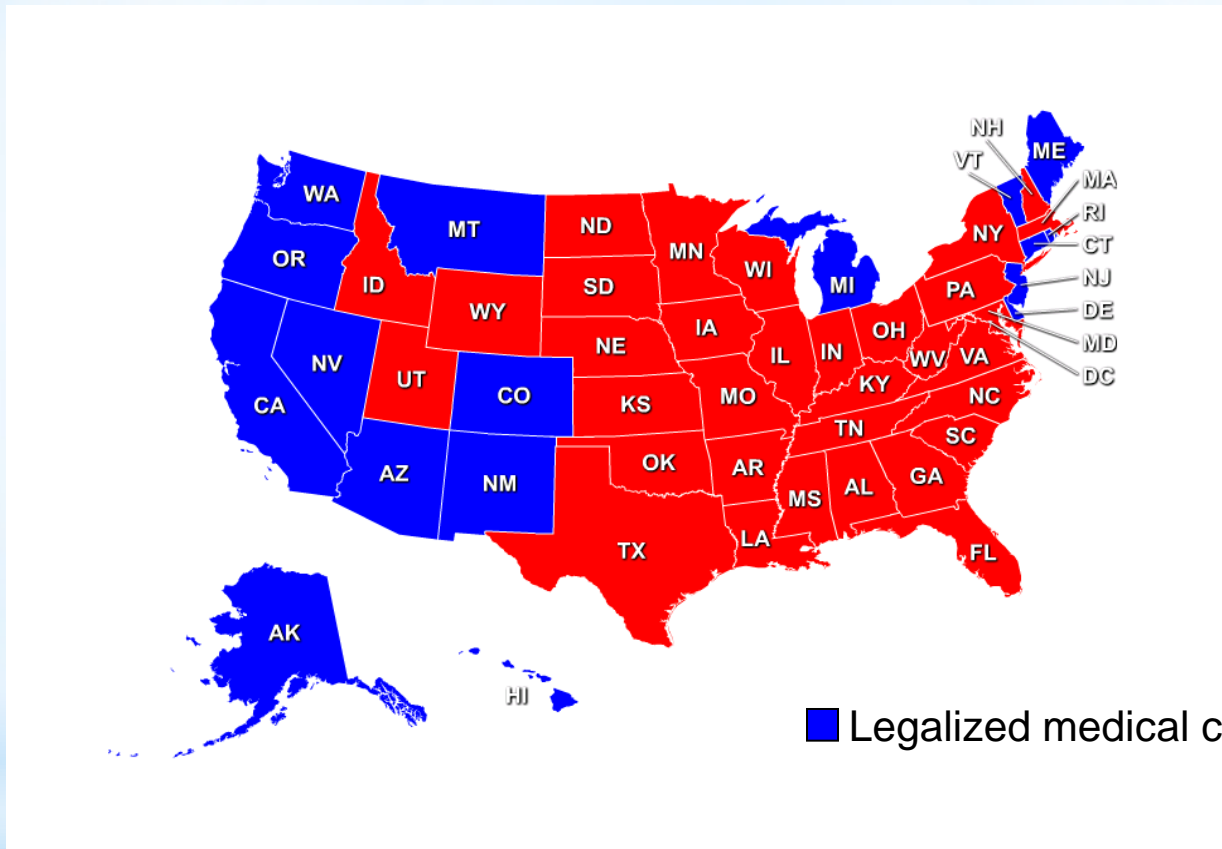


# Legal Status of Recreational Cannabis



Laws governing recreational use of cannabis  
are changing rapidly worldwide

# Legal Status of Medical Cannabis in US

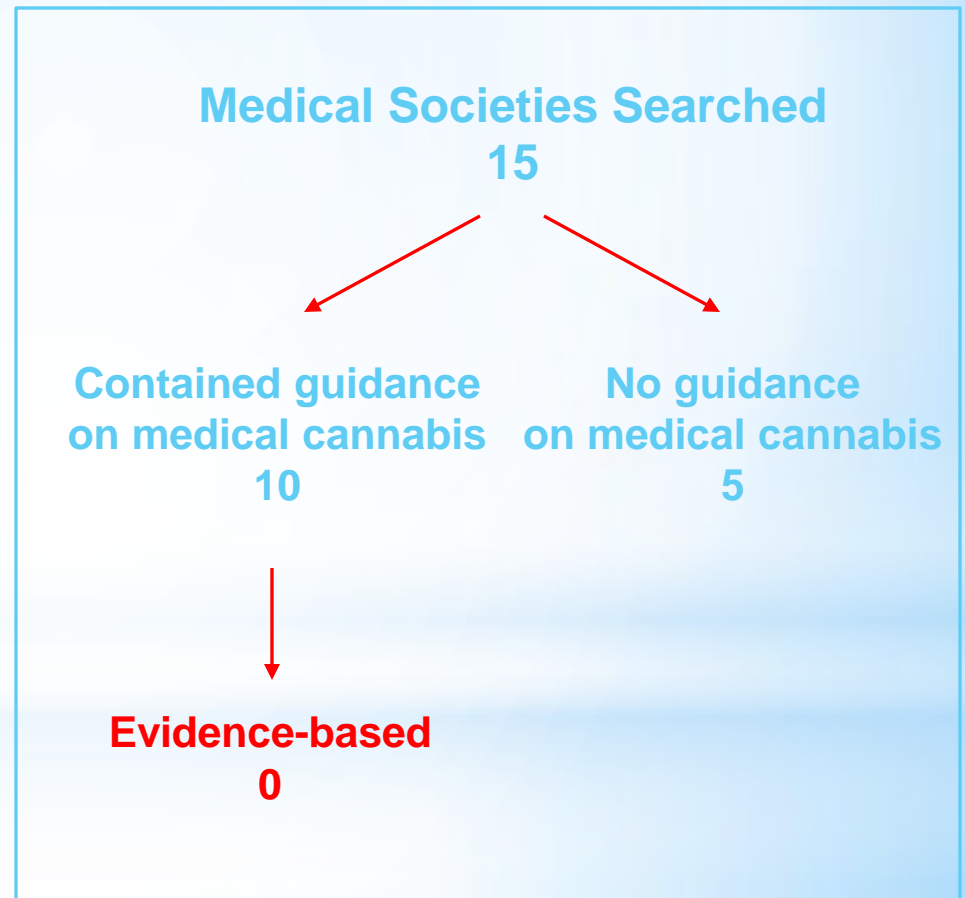


Medicinal cannabis, currently legal in 17 states plus D.C., is on the ballot in the upcoming election in several states.

# Guidelines from Medical Societies

We searched 15 North American medical societies for cannabis guidelines:

- \* American Medical Association
- \* American College of Physicians
- \* American Psychiatric Association
- \* American Association of Family Physicians
- \* American Cancer Society
- \* American Society for Addiction Medicine
- \* American Academy of Ophthalmology
- \* American Academy of Pain Medicine
- \* American Academy of Neurology
- \* American Society of Anesthesiologists
- \* American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
- \* American Geriatric Society
- \* Canadian Medical Association
- \* Institute of Medicine
- \* International Association for the Study of Pain






# Guidelines from Federal Agencies

<b>Government Agency</b>	<b>Clinical guidance about cannabis?</b>	<b>Is guideline evidence-based?</b>
FDA (Federal Drug Administration)	N	
NCI (National Cancer Institute)	N	
NIDA (National Institute on Drug Abuse)	N	
NIH (National Institutes of Health)	Y	N

# What other sources of guidance are available online?

Most guidance about medical cannabis comes from:

-  Organizations with a political agenda  
(promoting or opposing the legalization of cannabis)
-  Politically neutral databases of information  
(such as ProCon.org)
-  Promotional websites of for-profit cannabis dispensaries

20.32% THC

0.82% CBD

<0.01% CBN



**Taste:** Light spicy earthy diesel flavor

**Aroma:** Deep earthy rounded diesel smell

**Effect:** Heavy body stone that keeps you grounded while always producing a strong cerebral high.

**Recommended For:** Chronic pain, anti-nausea, sleep disorders, and appetite stimulant

**Comments:** Winner of numerous Cannabis Cup Awards including 1st Place Indica in 2010 and 2011. Also won 2nd & 3rd place at 2011 LA Medical Cannabis Cup.

21.43% THC

1.28% CBD

<0.01% CBN



**Taste:** Thick, wholesome, and spicy with notes of cinnamon and ginger

**Aroma:** Spicy & earthy

**Effect:** Heavy relaxing body stone with a creeping and confusing head high.

**Recommended For:** Chronic pain, anti-nausea, insomnia, and appetite stimulant

**Comments:** 2008 High Times Cannabis Cup Winner - 1st Place Indica. Also, 2006 High Times Strain of the Year.

#### QUICK CONTACT

THE CLINIC COLORADO  
3888 E. Mexico Ave  
Denver, CO 80210  
P: 303.758.9114

THE CLINIC ON COLFAX  
4625 E. Colfax Ave.

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#### COLORADO MMJ LAWS

0-4-287 – ARTICLE XVIII, Section 14  
CO House Bill 10-1284  
CO Senate Bill 10-109  
CO House Bill 11-1043  
Medical Use of Marijuana - 5 CCR  
1006-2

#### ABOUT

#### RESOURCES

Department of Health & Environment  
New/Renewal Applications (over 18)  
New/Renewal Applications (under 18)  
Change of Address form  
Change of Caregiver/Medical Marijuana  
Center form  
Report Lost/Stolen Registration Card

# Marijuana Strain and Dispensary Reviews

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By Leafly

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Category: [Lifestyle](#)

Updated: Feb 27, 2012

Version: 1.3.1

Size: 5.5 MB

Language: English

Seller: Leafly

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Frequent/Intense Alcohol, Tobacco, or Drug Use or References

**Requirements:** Compatible with iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad. Requires iOS 4.0 or later.

## Customer Ratings

Current Version:  
★★★★★ 798 Ratings

All Versions:  
★★★★★ 1895 Ratings

## Description

Browse through over 16,000 individual reviews of more than marijuana 500 strains. Filter cannabis strains by their effects and find your favorites nearby. Use the map to locate dispensaries in your area and read reviews that other medical marijuana patients have posted. See the most up-to-date dispensary menus and follow your favorite collective to get daily special deals.

Looking for the strain that will help keep you active and focused? We got it. How about something that helps with insomnia? There's a strain for that too.

[Marijuana Strain and Dispensary Reviews Support](#)

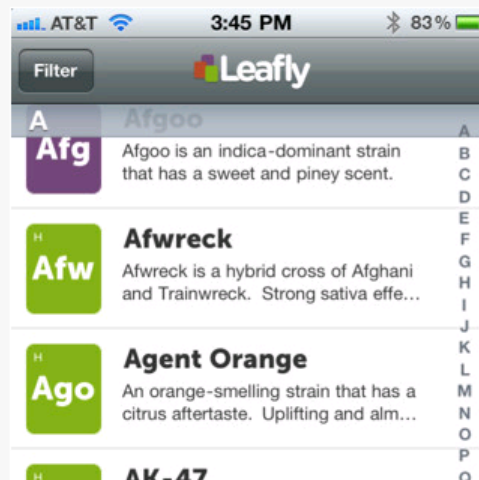
## What's New in Version 1.3.1

Now with over 500 strains, 17,000 individual reviews, and 2,000 photos!

\* See dispensary specials.

[...More](#)

## iPhone Screenshots



# Conclusions

- \* Most guidance on medical cannabis is marked by political bias, lack of evidence, and business interests.
- \* Few clinical guidelines have been published by medical societies
- \* The guidelines that are available are of poor quality, failing to meet any of the 11 criteria of high-quality guidelines set forth by the Guidelines International Network, such as disclosure of conflicts of interest, clearly stated recommendations, and use of systematic review methods.



There is a vacuum



# Future guidelines

Over 100 clinical studies have been done on cannabis, and several systematic reviews have been done on cannabis and pain.

Medical Condition	Clinical Trials of Cannabis*
Pain	51
Nausea	21
Multiple Sclerosis	27
Glaucoma	5

\*Cochrane Central Register of Clinical Trials

Whether medical Cannabis should be legalized or not, we should use the best available evidence to inform this and individual patient treatment decisions. Future guidelines should be based on the best available evidence.

**Evidence based guidelines on medical cannabis can improve patient care and reduce misuse.**