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Outcomes, Registries and Medical Marijuana: Towards Establishing Dispensary Monitoring and Reporting Standards

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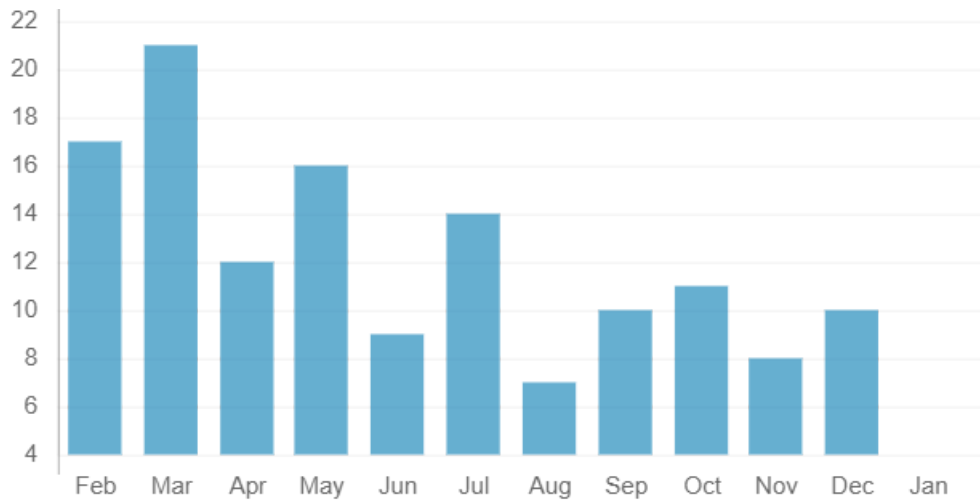
abstract

The acceptance by a large number of state governments of medical marijuana dispensaries and the regulatory framework to support their licensing has put to one side the issue of monitoring and reporting outcomes. This is a major oversight. It is an untenable situation given the limited evidence base for the clinical benefits and risks associated with dispensed botanical marijuana. The purpose of this commentary is to propose that, as a condition of licensing, marijuana dispensaries should be required to establish a registry to support ongoing monitoring of patient response associated with botanical cannabis formulations. Patients should be monitored over the course of their treatment to assess, in the case of severe non-cancer pain as an example, pain intensity and functional status by pain location. The dispensary, in meeting required audit standards, should be in a position to report on patient response over baseline to the provider who has recommended botanical cannabis. As well, registries should be in a position to report to state licensing agencies response to therapy by target patient groups. Establishing site-specific registries should go some way to meeting the present

evidence deficit for botanical marijuana, reducing barriers to its acceptance by providers, patients and health agencies.

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