

# The Compassionate Voice

Newsletter of the BC Compassion Club Society



January/February/March 2011

## Winter Party 2010

On 13 December, 400 BCCCS members joined staff and board in celebrating the winter season.

A delicious vegetarian meal, great member performances, the Carnival Band, and a multitude of gifts made this annual winter party an awesome time for all.

The event was DJed by BCCCS' Jeet-Kei and MCed by Dave. A number of BCCCS staff volunteered to set up, coordinate during the event and take-down at the end of the day.

Thank-yous go out to volunteers, performers, the Wise Hall staff, the caterer and the following generous donors: Paranda Imports, Audiopile, Famous Foods, Terra Breads, Tall-

grass, Prado Coffee and anonymous members.

An equally big thank-you to Anna and the Winter Party Committee that put the event together and made it a thoroughly enjoyable one.



## Help Fight Bill S-10

The nefarious Bill S-10 has been passed by the Canadian Senate and is now going through first reaching at the House of Commons.

Bill S-10 seeks to introduce mandatory minimum sentencing for anyone growing as few as six plants, as well as sentences for making or sharing cannabis edibles. The Bill will essentially criminalize medicine and overcrowd prisons.

Want to fight the Bill? Donate this month via the Donor Boxes in the lanes: all collections go to sending MMAR patients to Parliament to protest Bill S-10 and the repressive climate against medical cannabis in Canada.

## BCCCS at World AIDS Day

December 1 marked a day for awareness about AIDS. Staff from the BCCCS attended the World AIDS Day event at the Carnegie Community Centre.

Isaac gave a presentation on cannabis' effects on AIDS symptoms such as appetite loss. Riel, Elsa (pictured to the right) Jeet-Kei and Sara coordinated the BCCCS table with information on cannabis as therapy.

The event was well-attended by a host of local action groups as well as a large audience of persons with AIDS and allies.

BCCCS would like to thank staff and allies that were there as well as the BC Persons with AIDS for organizing the event.

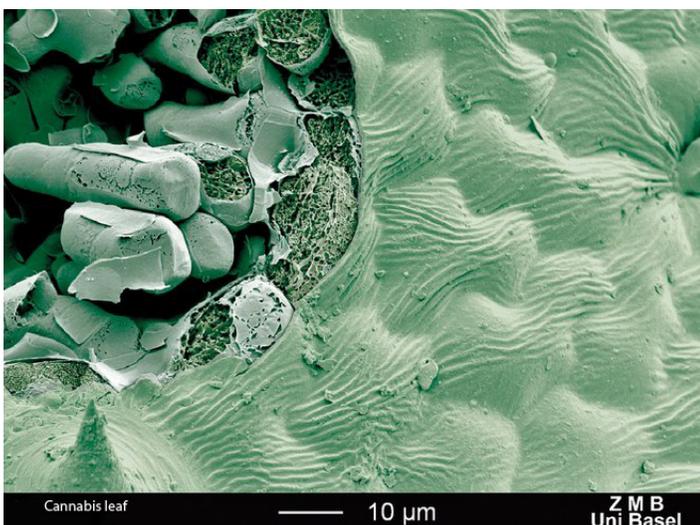


## Pain Relief From Cannabis

A study by McGill University found that herbal cannabis smoked three times daily over five days by subjects significantly reduced pain intensity as compared to a placebo.

The randomized controlled study was performed by Dr. Mark Ware and published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal. Over the trial period 21 adults with chronic neuropathic pain inhaled 25 mg of cannabis containing 9.4% THC.

It is worth noting that THC is just one of many compounds present in cannabis.



## Cannabis and the Immune System

A recent study by Dr. Prakash Nagarkatti for the University of South Carolina has come under fire after it claimed that smoking cannabis may trigger the suppression of the body's immune system.

The study as published in the *European Journal of Immunology* has been contentious against the many studies that have shown the exact opposite - that compounds in cannabis actually help manage symptoms associated with cancer.

A second issue with the research was that it only looked at smoked cannabis, not ruling out if it was smoke and not cannabis that suppresses the immune system. Medicinal users have access to a wide variety of non-smoking options such as tinctures, baked goods, butter and vaporizers.



## The Importance of CBD:THC Ratios

A University College London study of 94 cannabis smokers showed that persons using high CBD:THC ratio strains (i.e. strains that contain more cannabidiol than Delta 9 tetrahydrocannabinol) are less prone to "the munchies" and further interaction with drugs.

Published by *Neuropsychopharmacology* journal, the study notes that strains with a high CBD:THC ratios may even be used for treating addictive disorders, including cannabis dependency.

## Reducing Diabetic Cardiomyopathy

Diabetes is linked to the weakening of the heart muscle i.e. cardiomyopathy; it is one of the worst aspects of being diabetic.

An international team of researchers from the United States of America, Switzerland and Israel assessed the effects of cannabidiol (CBD) on cardiomyopathy.

Published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, the study concluded that CBD reduced "myocardial dysfunction, cardiac fibrosis, oxidative stress, inflammation, cell death and interrelated signaling pathways."

Combined with the "excellent safety and tolerability profile of CBD," the researchers concluded that cannabis could have remarkable therapeutic potential on not just the treatment of diabetic complications, but also on cardiovascular disorders in general.

## Donations to Flood-Affected Oaxaca

An early-morning landslide in September swept through the village of Santa Maria Tlahuitoltepec, located in the state of Oaxaca in Mexico.

Tlahuitoltepec is a marginalized indigenous community made up of about 9000 people. It was not ready to handle the four deaths and buried homes that resulted from the landslide.

A past staff member whose family lives in the village alerted the BCCCS about what was going on there. Staff and members have been raising funds via the donation boxes since October.

The past three months of donations have raised a total of \$860.92 and 100 pesos. The money has been used to buy tents and sleeping bags for people from Santa Maria Tlahuitoltepec affected by the floods. The supplies went to persons whose houses were buried under the landslide.

To all our members that donated: thank you!



## Staff Changes

Winter brought some rather big changes to the BCCCS staff. Angela who has been an acupuncture practitioner with the Wellness Centre is leaving, as is Melanie who works as one of the Club nutritionists. Emma from Supply said goodbye to the Club as well this season, taking some well-deserved time to look after her family. Having been at the BCCCS for ten years, and having worked in a number of departments, we'd like to thank Emma for her awesome work.

There are two excellent new people welcoming you in the lanes - Alex and Quin - who are both looking forward to meeting all the members.

## Research Update 2010

You may have noticed Megan and sometime Isaac hanging out in the wait-room with surveys for members to fill out. BCCCS members filled out a total of about 100 of these on peoples' experiences with medical cannabis. The forms are part of a research project coordinated by Phillippe Lucas in partnership with VICCS, the Dispensary, Green Cross and of course BCCCS.

One massive research proposal in the works these past few months was the community-based research around medical cannabis access from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

The BCCCS also submitted for a Canadian Research Institute Operating Grant to evaluate medical cannabis in the HIV/AIDS community.

In the works as well is a grant request from for the Community Health Initiative on Medicinal Cannabis, Problematic Substance Use and Mental Health; Drug or Panacea?

BCCCS is additionally part of a look at cannabis as substitute for other drugs via a compassion club-based survey.

Healing Our Spirit has taken on BCCCS as a collaborator on a proposal application to CIHR on examining same sex relationships abuse and its effects on HIV/AIDS.

The newly-formed research committee is made up of: Megan, Jasmyn, Vera, Riel, MaryAnn and Kathryn. Goals for 2011 include initiating/collaborating on community-based research projects and to develop proposals for BCCCS clinic studies on cannabis and other herbs.

A big change is the specific feedback form on the website - use it to report your experience with different strains and therapies as reference for other members.



## Supplement Profile: Essential Fatty Acids

Essential fatty acids are vital to the healthy functioning of the body. The Omega-6 fatty acid, gamma linolenic acid (GLA), is a smooth-muscle relaxor. It also supports the health of the skin, connective tissue, female reproductive health, eye health and cognitive health. Studies have shown that it can increase bone density as well. Omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA are beneficial to the cardiovascular system by maintaining healthy blood vessels, enhancing blood flow and regulating normal triglyceride and cholesterol levels. These fatty acids are also supportive of healthy brain function and can benefit those coping with cognitive and behavioral disorders.

The Wellness Centre has discontinued carrying salmon oil due to the concerns of sustainability of wild salmon, but do carry a number of other healthy oil products.

Omega-3 oils:

- AOR's Omega EPA derived from anchovies and screened for mercury
- Natural Factors flaxseed oil

Omega-6 oils:

- AOR's GLA 240 derived from borage oil
- Natural Factors UltraPrim derived from evening primrose oil

## Feedback?

We'd love to hear from you about your thoughts on the newsletter. Email [communications@thecompassionclub.org](mailto:communications@thecompassionclub.org).

## 10% Off Vitamins & Supplements

The BCCCS Wellness Centre stocks several high quality brands at affordable prices.

Being a not-for-profit centre, the WC provides low-cost natural therapies to those that would not be able to otherwise afford alternative health care. We subsidize 88% of the cost of treatments, providing below-cost appointments and donating supplements/herbs every year.

Bring in this newsletter to get 10% off vitamins and supplements bought at the WC till April 1, 2011. Happy new year everyone!



## A Very Special Winter Gift

BCCCS' annual winter gifts for members' children was a resounding success this year. Staffers LeeAnn and Lisa put together a list of 44 children and painstakingly gathered gifts for them just in time for the holiday season.

An enormous thanks especially to member K. Smith who donated generously towards the children's gift fund, and made sure the BCCCS was able to get a gift for every child on the list: you've brought smiles and joy this season to children who needed them.