

The Compassionate Voice

Newsletter of the BCCCS



January/February/March 2012

Winter Party 2011!

This year's Winter Party, on December 19, was a rocking good time.

Party-goers had a bountiful healthy meal created by caterer Brenda and got to enjoy some amazing musical performances. There were sad songs, thankful songs, seasonal songs and a memorable performance by the Carnival Band to finish the program.

Everyone was in high spirits as BCCCS Staff distributed gifts of all types during the event.

It was a truly fun day thanks to attendees, member volunteers, the Board of Directors, staff, the WISE Hall and the following donors: Paranada Imports, Puff, Stong's, Famous Foods, Kind Seed, Terra Breads, Tallgrass and the various members who personally donated gifts to their peers. Stay tuned to our next two annual events - the Annual General Meeting in May and the Summer Picnic! Have a happy new year!



BCCCS at World AIDS Day

December 1 marked World AIDS Day, in memory of those that have died due to the disease as well as a day for people to unite against HIV and show support for those living with the condition.

BCCCS attended the annual World AIDS Day event at Carnegie Community Centre, tabling and presenting about medical cannabis.

A big thanks to John Cameron and all the volunteers from the event for the space, time to speak and delicious meals that made World AIDS Day a strong community gathering.

BCCCS also in December presented to the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), on medical cannabis and harm reduction. We hope to continue doing a fair amount of outreach and community-building in the DTES.

Post-traumatic Stress (PTSD)

According to an observational study by scientists of MaReNa Diagnostic and Consulting Center in Israel presented at the Cannabinoid Conference 2011 in Bonn, Germany, the use of cannabis may improve symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

As a part of their routine consulting work, researchers assessed the mental condition of 79 adult PTSD patients, who applied to the Ministry of Health in order to obtain a license for the medical use of cannabis. Only part of them (about 50%) got cannabis licenses and constitutes the study group. They were followed for a period of about two years.

The majority of PTSD patients also used conventional medications, prescribed by their treating physicians. The cannabis daily dosage was about 2-3 grams per day. In most cases a significant improvement in quality of life and pain, with some positive changes in severity of posttraumatic stress disorder was observed. The patients reported a discontinuation or lowering of the dosage of pain killers and sedatives. The majority of improved PTSD patients belonged to groups with either additional pain and/or depression. Researchers concluded that "results show good tolerability and other benefits (...) particularly, in the patients with either pain and/or depression comorbidity."



Hemp seeds (sativa)

Ischemia

According to research at King Faisal University in Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia, cannabidiol (CBD) prevented the liver from damage caused by reduced blood perfusion (ischemia). Researchers concluded that cannabidiol represents a potential therapeutic option to protect the liver against injury caused by transient reduced supply with oxygen.

The study was published in the *European Journal of Pharmacology*.



Tattoo art by StretchCas tertem tis. Valii fauctuam re

U of T Maps Cannabis Genome

Researchers at the University of Toronto sequenced the complete genome of two cannabis strains: Purple Kush and Finola (mostly used for fibre hemp). Researchers hope that the availability of the genome "will further the development of therapeutic marijuana strains with tailored cannabinoid profiles and provide a basis for the breeding of hemp with improved agronomic characteristics."

Cannabis Combined with Opioids

A San Francisco General Hospital clinical study published in *Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics* investigated the effects of inhaled (via vapourizer) cannabis on 21 patients who were on a twice-daily dose of morphine and oxycodone.

Researchers found that pain was significantly decreased by an average of 27% by cannabis inhalation. They concluded "that vaporized cannabis augments the analgesic effects of opioids without significantly altering plasma opioid levels. The combination may allow for opioid treatment at lower doses with fewer side effects."

BCCCS Talks to VCH and VSB

In early December BCCCS communication coordinators went to a meeting between representatives of the cannabis community and a variety of managers & coordinators from Vancouver Coastal Health, primarily focused on addiction and youth services. Several of the latter managed school-aged youth programs with the Vancouver School Board.

This was the first such meeting of its kind. A general enthusiasm for the dialogue happening was expressed in the round of introductions. A wide-ranging conversation ensued over two hours. Two topics brought by VCH were seeing if agreement could be found around messaging in regards to reducing harm for youth, within context of a 'Safer Cannabis Use' pamphlet (to be produced by VCH) & the annual 420 rally, attended by thousands of youth every year. We shared our practices and education around safer use, as well as anecdotal incidence of people using cannabis as substitute for prescription drugs.

Three outcomes emerged:

a) The possibility of BCCCS and other organizations providing feedback around safer use for a VCH-produced pamphlet.

b) Lending one another mutual credibility around the annual 420 event. VCH speakers have been invited to the rally, and is considering issuing a press release regarding youth and cannabis use.

c) There is the potential for VCH to facilitate a larger forum with doctors from VCH with the cannabis community.

VCH's stance on public health, harm reduction and recognition of medical validity makes the organization and its affiliate valuable allies. Their goal is pro accurate health messaging, supporting healthy living. With youth, they support frank, complex discussions around cannabis use, including programs facilitating these discussions & self-assessments as alternatives to suspension. VCH has been working with VANDU for years, and is also part of the Stop the Violence coalition that supports cannabis legalization.



Hash and Oil

Based on member feedback from the questionnaires regarding increasing the menu options for hashish and cannabis oils, we've sourced more varieties of both and have a minimum of two hashes and two rotating types of oil on at all times! We are continuing to look for Indica dominant hash, but because of the shortened flowering time of crosses and Sativa dominant strains, Indicas are becoming increasing harder to source. We thank you very much for your valuable input and look forward to continuing to expand and refine the menu based on your feedback.

New Vapourizers

Vapor Genie \$70 Black or Natural Wood Colour

A simple no frills introductory vaporizer. The Vapor Genie's body is solid ash (hardwood), sanded down to a smooth finish and sealed with a food-grade varnish. According to the manufacturer, there are no glues, adhesives or toxic materials used in the VaporGenie. It's a two piece device with a ceramic filter that uses a lighter to vaporize. It is one of the easiest vaporizers to use on the market.

Extreme Solo \$280 Black or Silver (pictured left)

Another invention by the Canadian company Arizer, this vaporizer is completely portable and is charged using electricity! Being small and sleek, the vaporizer is quite simple to use. It has seven different temperature settings for it's ceramic filter (as high as 410F) that are highlighted by neon lights on the front of the body. The Solo contains a lithium ion battery, and only takes about two minutes to heat up! The one drawback of this module is that you cannot vape while charging.

Feedback?

We'd love to hear from you about your thoughts on the newsletter. We've already had some excellent feedback to have the newsletter in colour and add some style. Email communications@thecompassionclub.org.



Supplement Profile:

Iron

Iron is essential in the manufacturing of red blood cells. A deficiency in red blood cells from a lack of this element can result in iron-deficiency anemia. The symptoms of anemia can go unrecognized but can include, but are not limited to: loss of appetite, constipation, headaches, irritability, difficulty in concentrating, weakness, fatigue, coldness of extremities, depression, dizziness, pale and brittle nails, pail lips and eyelids, and soreness in the mouth. It is very important to get a blood test to determine your iron or ferritin levels. Too much iron in the body is unhealthy and can cause damage so you only want to supplement when you know that you need it.

Easy ways to increase your iron levels are to cook in a cast iron pan or pot. You can also drink nettle leaf tea. To do this bring 1 cup of water to a boil, remove from the heat and add 1 heaping teaspoon of nettle leaves. Let the herb steep for 10-15 min covered. Strain and drink. Do this 2-3 times a day (you can add peppermint or fennel to flavour the tea). Another way to increase your iron levels is to warm a cup of milk (cow, goat, soy, almond) and stir in 1 Tablespoon of Blackstrap molasses. Drink this every night.

Finally, you can supplement with capsules. It is important to know that iron is best absorbed when combined with Vitamin C. In the Wellness Centre we carry Thorne's Iron Citrate and Megafoods Blood Builder that both help to boost iron levels in the body. The Thorne Iron Citrate should be accompanied with a Vitamin C but the Megafoods included Vitamin C. For the month of January, both the Thorne Iron Citrate and the Megafoods Blood Builder will 10% off.

Non-smokables Feedback & Update

Thanks for all of your help and support by giving us feedback about our Non-Smokable Menu and filling out an "Edibles Feedback Form". We aim to meet your needs and hope that this past year's changes have made a difference.

This year, we have widened our selection, provided a savory option as well as focused on strengthening our availability and consistency. Some things that we are working on for now include providing more Do It Yourself Tips for members to use both in house and on our website, and looking for more gluten and sugar free options. Check out our "Quick and easy butter making" tips and our "Not so quick but easy tincture making" recommendations online in the members area.

If you have any questions or ideas please feel free to add them to our suggestion box.

WC Waiting Times

Thanks for filling out the member feedback forms!

We would like to acknowledge your disappointment regarding our long wait-lists in the Wellness Centre. Reducing wait times is a high priority for us, so we are discussing how to serve our membership in a more timely fashion.

89% of the funds to run the Wellness Centre come from medicine sales and membership fees. As the number of medical cannabis dispensaries increases, we have seen a noticeable decline in our sales. While we appreciate that people have greater access to medicine and strain variety, this also means that we have less funding for the Wellness Centre which could result in fewer members being seen.

For these reasons we are:

1. Encouraging everyone (members, and the general public) to buy high-quality, reasonably priced supplements in our Wellness Centre. Buying your supplements here is a great way to support the Wellness Centre.

2. Encouraging other dispensaries to adopt our model of allocating profits to provide holistic health programs for members.

3. Hiring volunteer health practitioners to fill vacant rooms in the Wellness Centre.

Thanks for your patience while we continue work towards shorter wait times.