



Consensus Statement of the Philippine League Against Epilepsy, Inc, the Philippine Neurological Association, and the Child Neurology Society, Philippines Inc, on the Use of Medical Marijuana for the Treatment of Epilepsy

Epilepsy is one of the most common chronic neurological disorders. An estimated 1 million Filipinos suffer from epilepsy. Among patients with epilepsy, about 30% are considered intractable due to continued seizures despite treatment with antiepileptic medications. For this subset of patients, there has been a clamor to find the best suited drug to control the seizures.

In recent years, much attention has been drawn to the use of medical marijuana for various diseases, including neurologic conditions, that have not responded to conventional therapy. For epilepsy, clinical trials have been undertaken to examine the efficacy of medical marijuana, in particular, the extract cannabidiol, for the treatment of medically intractable epilepsy.

The clinical trials on the efficacy of cannabidiol for treating seizures particularly in Dravet Syndrome and Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome have shown positive results, leading to the approval of pharmaceutical grade cannabidiol (Epidiolex) by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for this indication.

Pharmaceutical grade cannabidiol can be accessed for compassionate use through the Philippine FDA. As doctors, we have been working hand-in-hand with government agencies to assist our patients in obtaining access to safe and effective medical marijuana.

We are recommending the conduct of local research to assess the safety and efficacy of medical cannabis for Filipino patients with epilepsy under the current regulatory framework of the FDA and Dangerous Drugs Board.

Any other form of cannabis for the treatment of other epilepsy types or syndromes should meet all the Philippine FDA requirements for approval, including a thorough quality control process to ensure the safety of our patients.

The Philippine League Against Epilepsy, the Philippine Neurological Association, and the Child Neurology Society, Philippines are the leading and internationally recognized organizations of healthcare professionals involved in the treatment and advancement of epilepsy in the country, through education, research, and advocacy. We are composed of neurologists, epileptologists, and neuroscientists committed to the care of persons with epilepsy.

Position Statement History

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