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Australia investigates multi-stakeholder views on use of, and access to medicinal cannabis

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Barriers to accessing medicinal cannabis



A team of researchers from Griffith University, Australian National University, University of Newcastle, University of Melbourne and University of Wollongong have come together to investigate multi-stakeholder views on the use of, and access to medicinal cannabis in Australia.

Focusing on three key areas, the study looked at public and industry preferences for medicinal cannabis, possibility of having medicinal cannabis products registered with the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and clinical trials to determine the baseline effectiveness of different cannabinoids and cannabis medicines.

Many submissions from patients or family members stated they had experienced obstacles in accessing medicinal cannabis products, pointing to various supply, regulatory, legislative, financial, and dispensing challenges that hindered timely access to medicinal cannabis products.

According to lead researcher Dr Daniel Erku from Griffith University, "While the government has made a series of reforms to the way these products are accessed, the current model is still not fit for purpose because it puts a lot of pressure on both prescribers and patients."

Interest in cannabis-based medicines (CBMs) has increased in Australia, but while recent policy and legislative changes have enabled health practitioners to prescribe CBMs, many patients still struggle to access them.

The question of how to regulate medicinal cannabis has been a major source of debate in many countries and continues to divide the public health community.