

Consumer research report on cannabidiol (CBD) extracts

Area of research interest: [Novel and non-traditional foods, additives and processes](#)

Study duration: 2019-09-03

Conducted by: Community Research and 2CV

Summary

This consumer research into the behaviours and attitudes of cannabidiol (CBD) extracts users was carried out to better understand how they use CBD and whether they are aware that it is classified as a 'novel food'.

Background

Community Research and 2CV were commissioned by the Food Standards Agency to conduct small-scale research with CBD users to understand their behaviours and attitudes in relation to their use of CBD, and their awareness of, and response to, the clarification that CBD is a 'novel food'.

Research approach

This small-scale research consisted of an online survey with 352 CBD users (229 current) followed by a qualitative online bulletin board with ten respondents from the survey; both elements of the research were conducted in September 2019.

Results

- Of those who have used CBD, around a third no longer use it. Around a quarter are regular users while the remaining four in ten use it on an occasional basis. Nearly all current users say that they are likely to continue to use it. Over three quarters of those currently using CBD have been doing so for less than a year.
- Tinctures are the most common format for taking CBD, followed by e-liquids, pills/capsules, and creams / ointments. Just under a third buy their CBD from health food stores, and just under a quarter from online CBD specialist retailers or online marketplaces. The key driver for deciding which type of CBD product to buy is the quality of the product, but the cost, trust in the retailer, level of CBD in the product and trust in the brand itself are all considered important factors in decision making for at least a third of respondents.
- Respondents reported that the main reason they use CBD is for pain relief. They also reported that CBD helped relieve anxiety, aided relaxation and sleep, supported mental health and relieved depression.
- Around two thirds of respondents feel CBD has benefitted their overall health and / or helped them with a medical condition. The conditions that people are most likely to say it has helped them with are anxiety / stress relief, arthritis and back pain.
- Over a third of CBD users say that they are reliant on it or that they would be bothered if they could no longer buy it.

- Most respondents are confident that the CBD products they are buying are high quality and contain what they say they do. Although the majority assume that CBD is regulated, a sizeable minority do express concern about the legal status of the CBD they buy. By and large, bulletin board participants are confident about the legality and quality of the products they buy. This confidence stems from purchasing from what they see as reputable retailers.
- There appears to be no awareness of CBD's status as a 'novel food'. When learning about this, some bulletin board participants express concern, but others are less perturbed. Similarly, there is a mixed response to the idea of CBD no longer being readily available from mainstream retailers – for some, knowing that it was not legal to sell or market CBD would be enough for them to stop using it, whilst others would simply source it elsewhere.

Research report

England, Northern Ireland and Scotland

PDF

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