Novel treatment and harm reduction strategies for cannabis use disorder

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Cannabis is the primary problem drug among first-time entrants to addiction treatment in Europe. Despite rising treatment demand there are no approved pharmacotherapies. I will firstly present evidence from a phase 2a randomised clinical trial of cannabidiol for the treatment of cannabis use disorder. Next, I will present experimental data on the use of cannabidiol for reducing the acute harms of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Finally, I will present data on the standard THC unit – a standardised measure of dose endorsed by the US National Institutes of Health. Taken together, these findings highlight the potential of using cannabinoids in treatment and harm reduction to reduce the global burden of disease attributable to cannabis.

Tom Freeman is the Director of the Addiction and Mental Health Group, an interdisciplinary research group bridging the departments of Psychology and Life Sciences at the University of Bath, UK. He is an elected Trustee and Director of the Society for the Study of Addiction, and Senior Editor for the journal Addiction. He is internationally known for his research on cannabis and cannabinoids. This includes observational studies characterising changes in cannabis products and their association with addiction and mental health outcomes, novel harm reduction strategies such as the standard THC unit (like the standard alcohol unit), the potential of cannabidiol to influence the effects of cannabis, and clinical trials of cannabidiol as a treatment for cannabis use disorder. His research has generated impacts with the US National Institutes of Health Research, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, the UK National Institute of Health and Care Excellence, and the UK Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs.