Development of Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome Following Use of a Cannabinoid Vape Product for Chronic Pain Management: A Case Report

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INTRODUCTION:

- There has been increased interest in cannabinoid-based supplements containing cannabidiol (CBD) and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) for chronic pain management.
- Those suffering from unalleviated chronic pain may use CBD as an "add on" therapy to reduce opioid dependency.
- CBD products containing unknown amounts of THC can lead to development of Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome (CHS), characterized by a triad of chronic cannabis use, cyclic vomiting, and compulsive hot bathing.

CASE PRESENTATION:

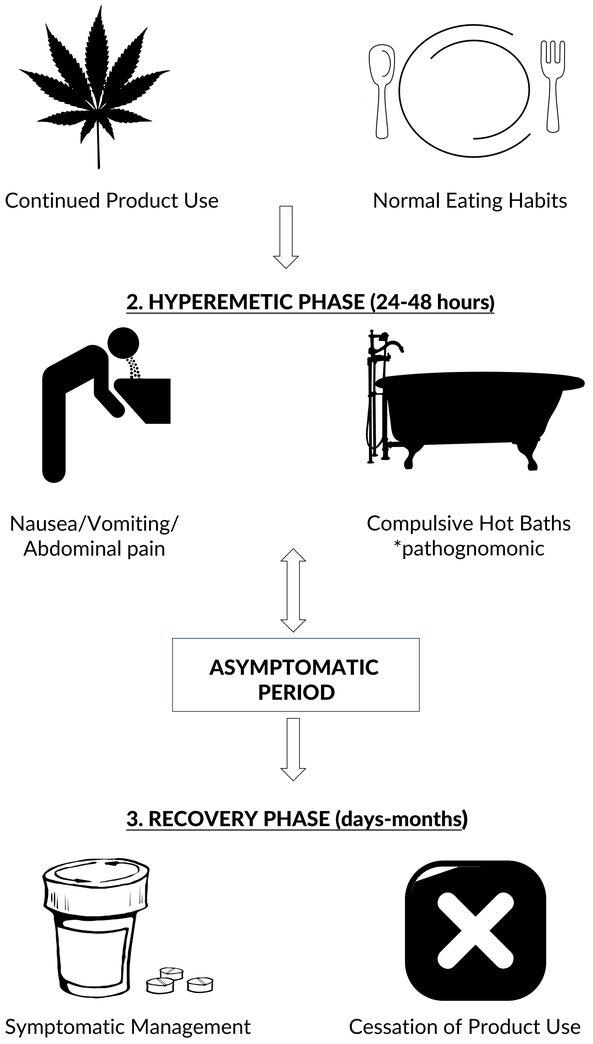
- 53-year-old female with past medical history of hypertension, and type 2 diabetes mellitus presented with a two-month history of cyclical vomiting and epigastric pain with episodes occurring approximately every two weeks and lasting 24-48 hours.
- She was asymptomatic during the interepisodic period and noted improvement of symptoms with hot showers.
- The patient reported near daily use of a CBD vape pen with an unknown formulation three months prior to symptom onset to help manage her chronic neck pain secondary to a prior motor vehicle accident.
- The diagnostic workup was largely negative for other causes.
- Anti-emetics provided little relief and at discharge, she was advised discontinuation of the CBD vape pen, the likely cause of her cyclical symptoms.

DISCUSSION:

- CHS is a clinical diagnosis. Symptomatic relief with hot baths is considered a pathognomonic feature.
- The most frequent duration of cannabis use among CHS patients is between 2-5 years (36.3.%) followed by 1 year or less (25.1%).[1]
- To achieve recovery, patients should be counseled regarding cessation of cannabis and its derivatives.
- Work is ongoing to understand the role of cannabinoid-based supplements in the treatment of chronic pain. Small to moderate improvement in pain has been reported with formulations with high and comparable THC:CBD ratio during short term treatment (1-6 months).[2]

Chronic pain patients using THC containing cannabinoid products are at risk of developing Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome- a clinical diagnosis requiring supportive management.

Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome (CHS) Phases:



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