

Dispensaries as sources of information: Filling a gap

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We are
the **Drug**
Policy
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Today's talk.

- A brief history of dispensaries
- Why there is a gap in information
- What kind of information is needed and why?
- How do dispensaries fill this role?

Dispensaries: Centered in community health

- Coffee shops in the Netherlands
- HIV in San Francisco
- Proposition P
- Early environments like community centers....

“Several doors away from a busy street corner is a nondescript door with a peep lens. Pressing the doorbell between the hours of 10 am and 7 pm weekdays, the door is opened by a doorman who asks to see the numbered club card... Entering midway into a large old former dime-a-dance hall above the bar below. The room is well lit from clerestory windows. The ceiling is covered by a huge rainbow flag. The walls are covered with local artists’ work and political posters...A large old dining room table dominates the center of the room, a semi-circle of sofas at the left, and smaller tables against the wall on the right accommodate the buyers. Joints are rolled, pipes and water pipes are filled and shared from medium grade cannabis furnished by the house on small trays. The dealers measure out the cannabis from behind a “bar” where buyers inspect and purchase cannabis...In addition to smoked cannabis, baked goods for oral use are sold...On the periphery, tables with diverse health and informational literature provide reading materials for the buyers. Stationary, postage and lists of politicians provide other activities for buyers, staff and visitors” Mikuriya, 1995.

Modern day dispensaries

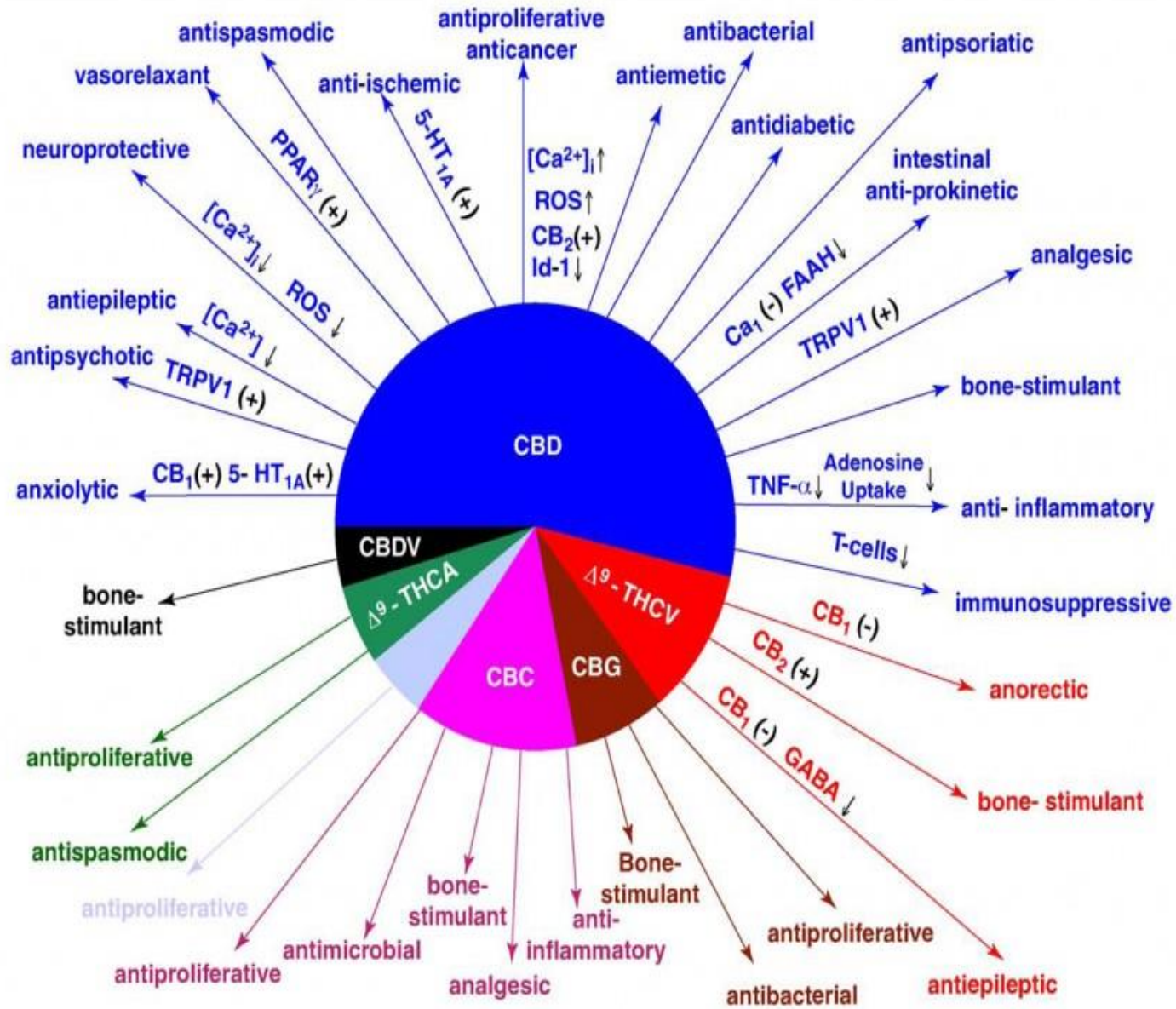
- Additional services
- Labeled and tested products
- Patient education
- Opportunities for activism
- Information on using cannabis
 - On specific illnesses

Why there is a gap in information

- Lack of medical education
- Fear in having the discussion
- Fear of ignorance
- NIDA's mission
- Politicization of research
- Patient driven information can be personal and contradictory

What kind of information is needed?

- Dosing and strain suggestions
- The clinical applications of cannabinoids
- Information on methods of ingestion
- Legal information
- Drug interactions
- Condition specific information
- Basic science on the endocannabinoid system



How do dispensaries fill this role?

- Condition specific booklets
- Seminars
 - Health related
 - Legal related
- Opportunities for activism
- Staff training
- Guest speakers
- Email lists