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**Thesis:**

Factors Influencing Physicians' Intentions to Recommend Cannabis for Therapeutic Purposes to Patients in Israel

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**Abstract:**

**Scientific Background:** More than 20,000 patients in Israel use cannabis for therapeutic purposes (CTP). Cannabis may be one of the most promising anti-nausea and anti-pain medications available, yet controversies are rampant, some of which are fuelled by the lack of clinical guidelines. Additionally, little is known about physicians' norms, attitudes and self-efficacy related to CTP and how these factors relate to recommending CTP to patients.

**Objectives:** To advance the knowledge of clinical practices related to CTP by identifying underlying factors that influence physicians' intentions to recommend CTP.

**Working Hypotheses:** Physicians' norms, attitudes and self-efficacy will influence intentions to recommend CTP. Differences are expected across physician specialty area due to differences in clinical population served, differences in physician training and experience.

**Type of Research:** A qualitative study, a Delphi expert panel study and a cross sectional study.

**Methods of Data Collections:** Qualitative interviews, online Delphi survey and pencil and paper cross sectional survey.

**Methods of Data Analysis:** Qualitative data will be content analyzed. Semi-interquartile range will be calculated in the Delphi survey data to examine expert agreement. Multiple linear regression will be used for the cross sectional survey to calculate the independent associations of factors associated with intention to recommend CTP according to agreed guidelines and potential differences across physician groups.

**Uniqueness and Relevance to Public Health:** Although specialist physicians in Israel are responsible for recommending CTP and although medical opinion should be one of the major forces informing for CTP, only a few studies have attempted to investigate how physicians view CTP. The proposed study will gather information that can inform policies and laws regulating CTP and can enhance evidence-based practice by evaluating the need for further medical education on this relatively new and rapidly growing area of medical care.

**Possible Policy Recommendations:** This study can inform policy and legislative developments related to CTP and it can inform initial and continued physician training programs focused on empowering physicians with knowledge and skills necessary to make CTP recommendations until scientific research provides clearer information.