

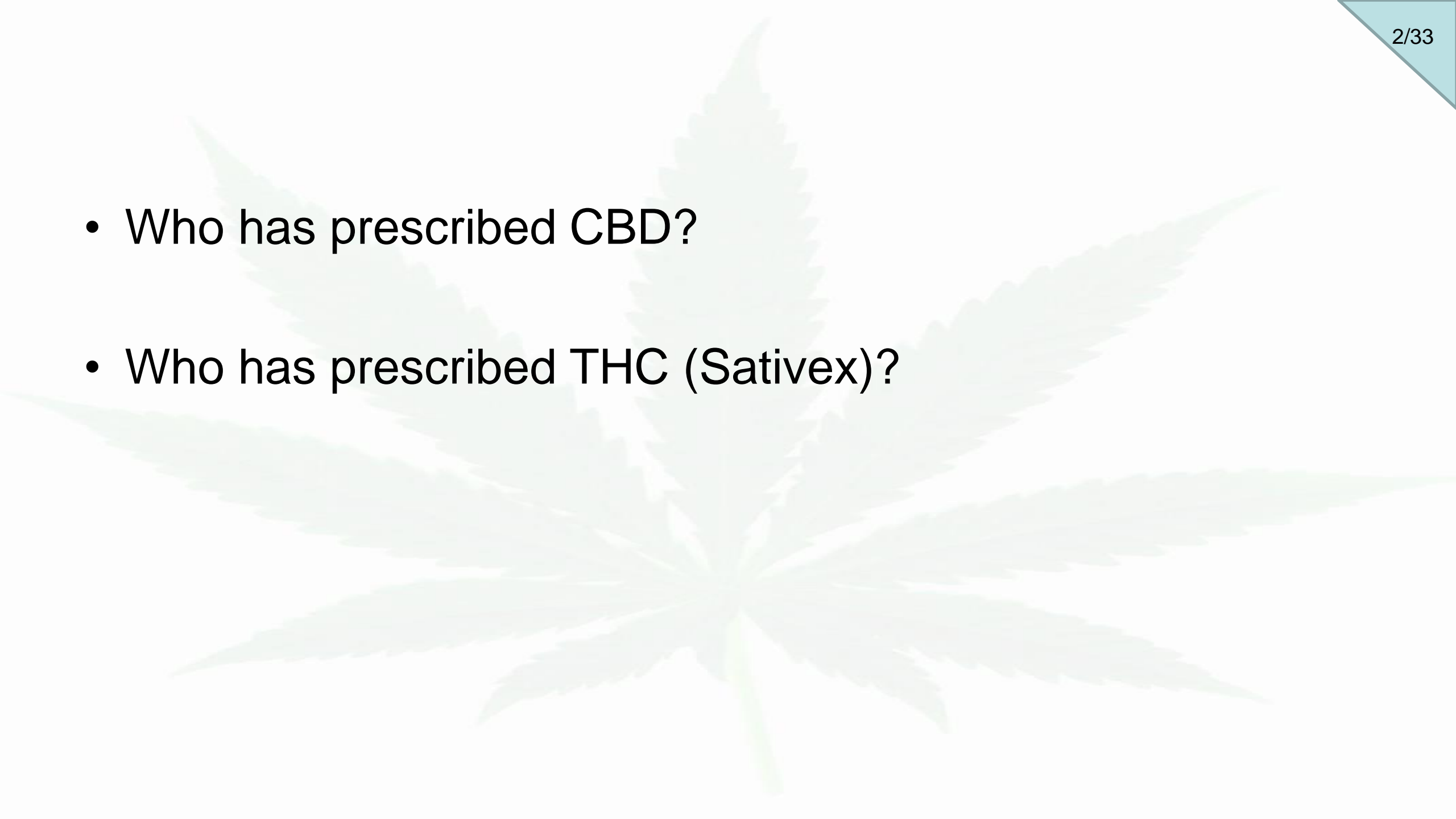
# How to prescribe CBD - medicinal cannabis 101

Graham Gulbransen

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**AIMA NZ Conference 7 April 2019**

- Who has prescribed CBD?
  - Who has prescribed THC (Sativex)?
- 



Keira Mcmurdo (above and inset, with mother Sascha Abey), has had fewer seizures since she began taking medicinal cannabis.

## 1-in-2-billion tot given cannabis

Emma Russell

An Invercargill toddler with a condition likely to cut her life short at the age of 4 is finding some relief thanks to medicinal cannabis.

Keira Mcmurdo is one of three people in the world with a rare condition known as FUT8.

For most of the 3-year-old's life she has suffered up to 30 seizures a day and cannot talk, walk or swallow.

For Keira's mum, Sascha Abey, watching her beautiful daughter suffer has been heart-breaking.

"I'd never seen a seizure before. I remember her first one — she went blue and her eyes rolled back. It's really tough seeing your own child go through that and not being able to do anything," Abey told the *Herald*.

But for the past month she has been given 1.5ml of cannabidiol (CBD) through her feeding tube every day

and her seizures have dropped to fewer than five a day.

"She can reach [and push off] the bottom of the pool now, something she had never been able to do before. She is more engaged and now loves interacting with people, you can hear the joy in her voice," Abey said.

She said medicinal cannabis wasn't a cure but it was life-changing.

"I just want to give my daughter the quality of life she deserves even if that's for less than a year."

Abey was 23 when she gave birth to her first-born, Keira. The doctor noticed part of Keira's brain wasn't developing the way it should be when she was in the womb, Abey said.

Keira weighed just 2.4kg when she was born at 38 weeks.

After 18 surgeries, many to insert drains behind her eyes to relieve the pressure of her glaucoma, she was diagnosed with FUT8 last March.

### Keira's condition

- Keira is one of three people in the world with a rare genetic condition called FUT8.
- She is unable to produce the right amount of glucogen her body needs.
- She can't walk, talk or swallow properly and has had up to 30 seizures a day.
- There is no cure and the high mortality rates mean sufferers normally don't make it to 7.

"I'd never heard of it and many doctors I speak to haven't heard of it because it's that rare. It doesn't even have a proper name," Abey said.

The disease means Keira is unable to produce the right amount of glucogen her body needs for

development, said New Zealand Organisation of Rare Diseases chief executive Dr Collette Bromhead.

She said the condition was rarely diagnosed because it's so lethal many don't make it.

Abey decided enough was enough and if she couldn't save her daughter she was going to do everything she could to give her a life she deserved.

"Keira's previous paediatrician mentioned medicinal cannabis as a last resort so I decided to do a bit of research.

"I was quite sceptical at first because I thought if it was really that effective, why isn't it recommended or more easily available?"

Abey pays \$460 every 12 days for her daughter's CBD. A Givealittle page set up last month has raised over \$2000 to help cover the costs.

She found Auckland GP Dr Graham Gulbransen, who has treated more

than 400 Kiwis aged 2 to 92 with CBD.

The substance is found in cannabis and has potential therapeutic value but few to no psychoactive effects.

In September 2017 it was made legal for medical practitioners and pharmacies to import CBD products along with persons or firms holding a licence to sell medicines wholesale.

Gulbransen said although it was illegal to promote the product he was getting emails and calls every day from doctors around the country wanting to know more about it.

"One of the reasons doctors are hesitant to prescribe it is because they're not trained or didn't know enough about it."

A bill that gives terminally ill people a legal defence for using illicit cannabis products passed its third reading in Parliament last month.

It covers all people needing palliative relief for terminal illness.

NZ Herald 2019-01-29

Keira 3yo

FUT8

CBD 150mg/day

Seizures reduced from 30 to 5 per day, more engaged, more active.

'Hi there we are doing fantastically! Keira is on .5ml morning and night and is having less than 12 seizures a week. It has been so great. Child development services and her physiotherapist are amazed at how much of an impact it has had on her she is able to do a lot more like swimming and make eye contact and she is starting to eat food as well as reach out for objects. Every day life has been made a whole lot easier. We are truly thankful that we were given the opportunity to have tilray and see her thrive so much. Thank you once again'



**Section 29 medicines** are considered 'new' medicines because they do not have a consent for distribution and advertising of such medicines is prohibited under section 20 of the Medicines Act.

## **20 Restrictions on sale or supply of new medicines**

(1) Except as provided in [sections 25](#), [26\(4\)](#), [28](#), [30](#), [31](#), and [32](#), this section applies to new medicines.

(2) **No person shall—**

(a) sell; or

(b) distribute by way of gift or loan or sample or in any other way; or

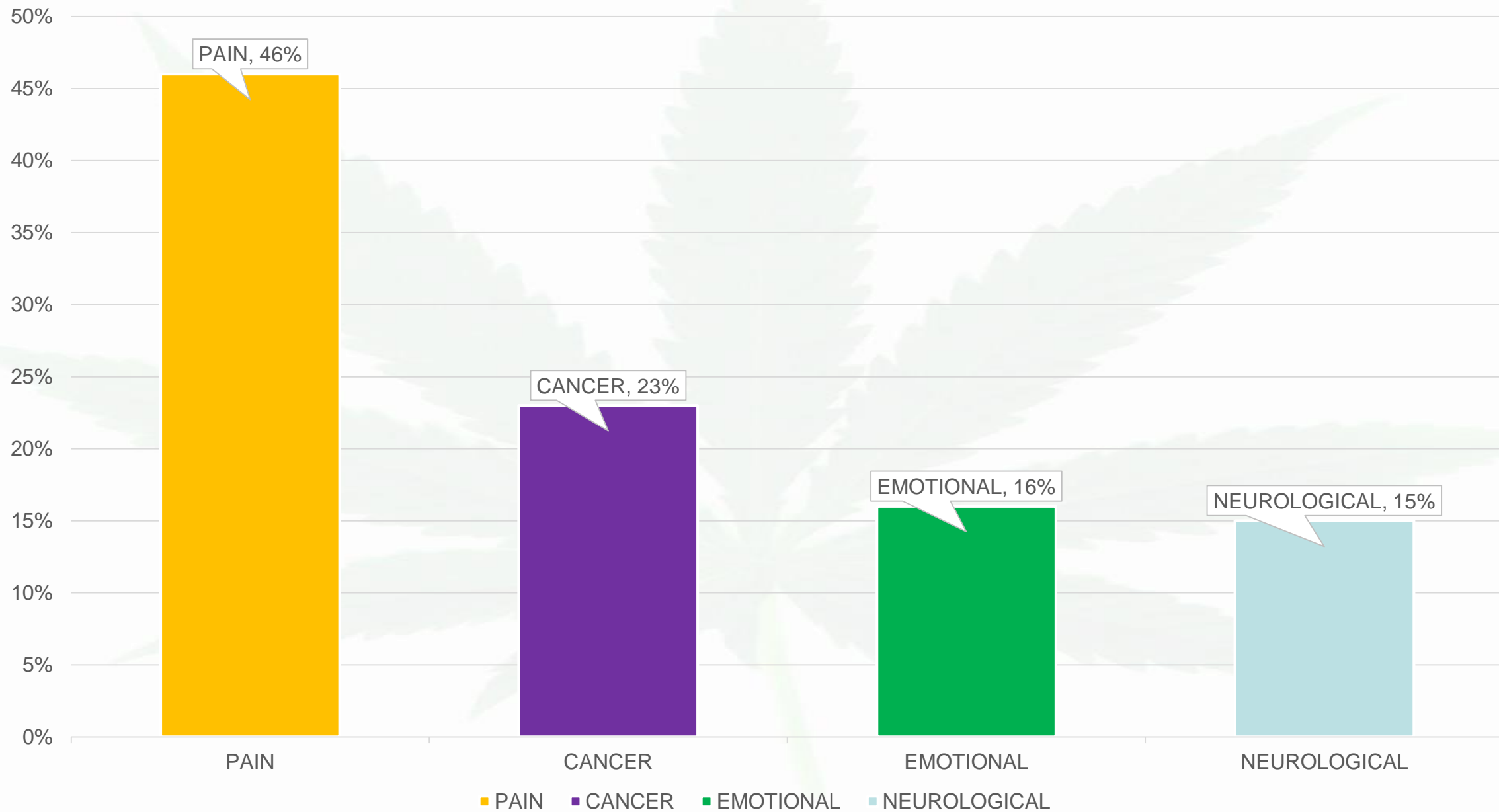
(c) **advertise the availability of—**

**any medicine to which this section applies** before the consent or provisional consent of the Minister to the distribution of the medicine has been notified in the *Gazette*, or otherwise than in accordance with such conditions as may be imposed by the Minister on giving his consent or provisional consent and notified in the *Gazette*.

# CBD Audit, 400 patients seen 2018

- Study design – follow up after using 25ml of CBD oil
- N=397
- Age 2 – 94
- 1/3 age 40-59
- 1/3 age 60-79
- Scale: NG – G – VG - E  $250/397 = 63\%$
- QoL eq  $109/397 = 28\%$
- QoL VAS  $107/397 = 27\%$

## N= 397, % Categories



# PAIN (chronic) 181 patients

- Fibromyalgia
- Osteoarthritis
- Polymyalgia rheumatica
- Low back pain
- Neuropathic pain
- Central sensitisation
- Endometriosis
- Trigeminal neuralgia
- Inflammatory or irritable bowel pain
- Migraine etc.



# CANCER SYMPTOMS 92 patients

- Often advanced with metastases
- Breast
- Bowel
- Prostate
- Lung
- Cervical
- Brain including glioblastoma multiforme (GBM)
- Melanoma etc.

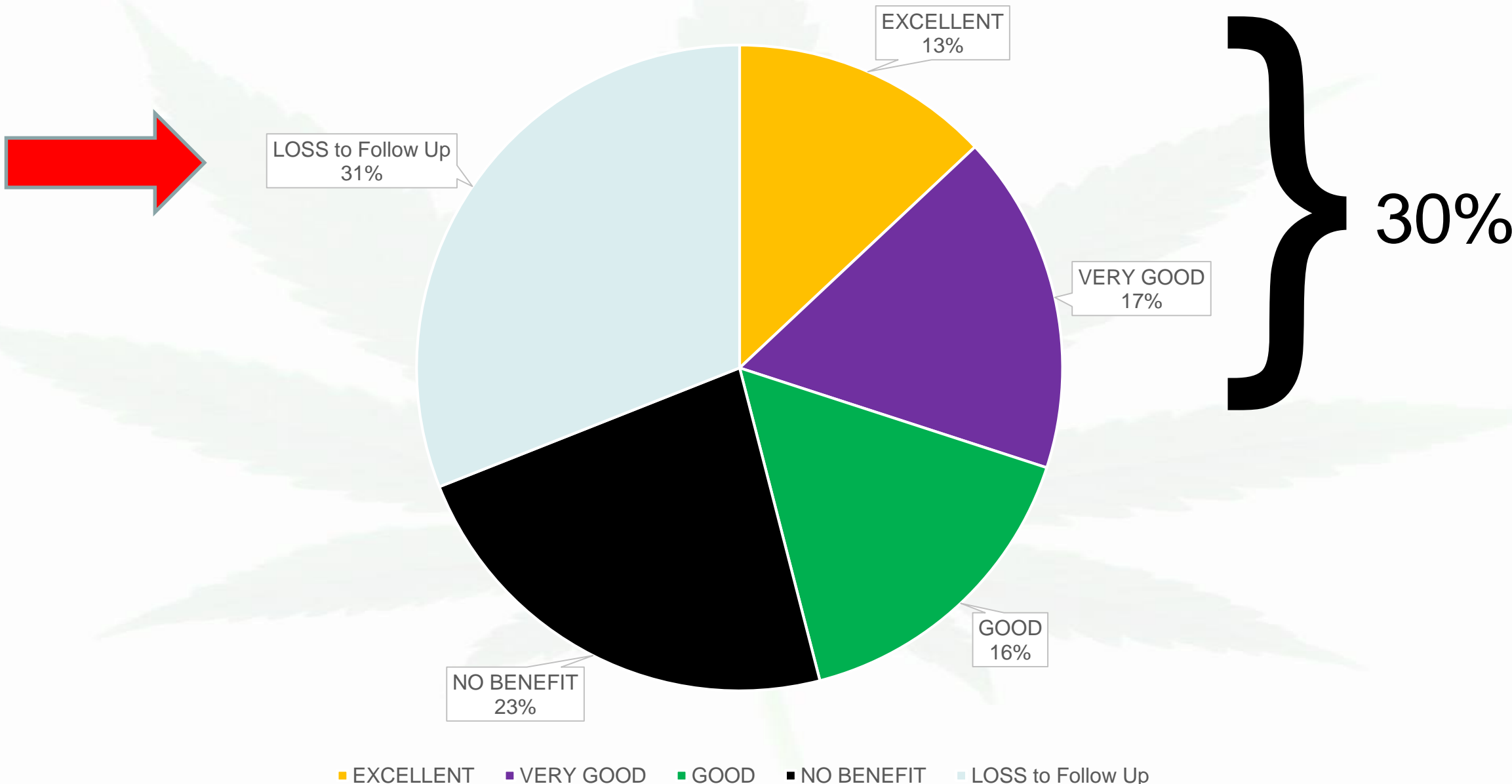
# EMOTIONAL DISTRESS 64 patients

- Anxiety/depression
- Insomnia
- ADHD
- Premenstrual syndrome (rages)
- Often comorbidities eg chronic pain, Tourettes, ASD.

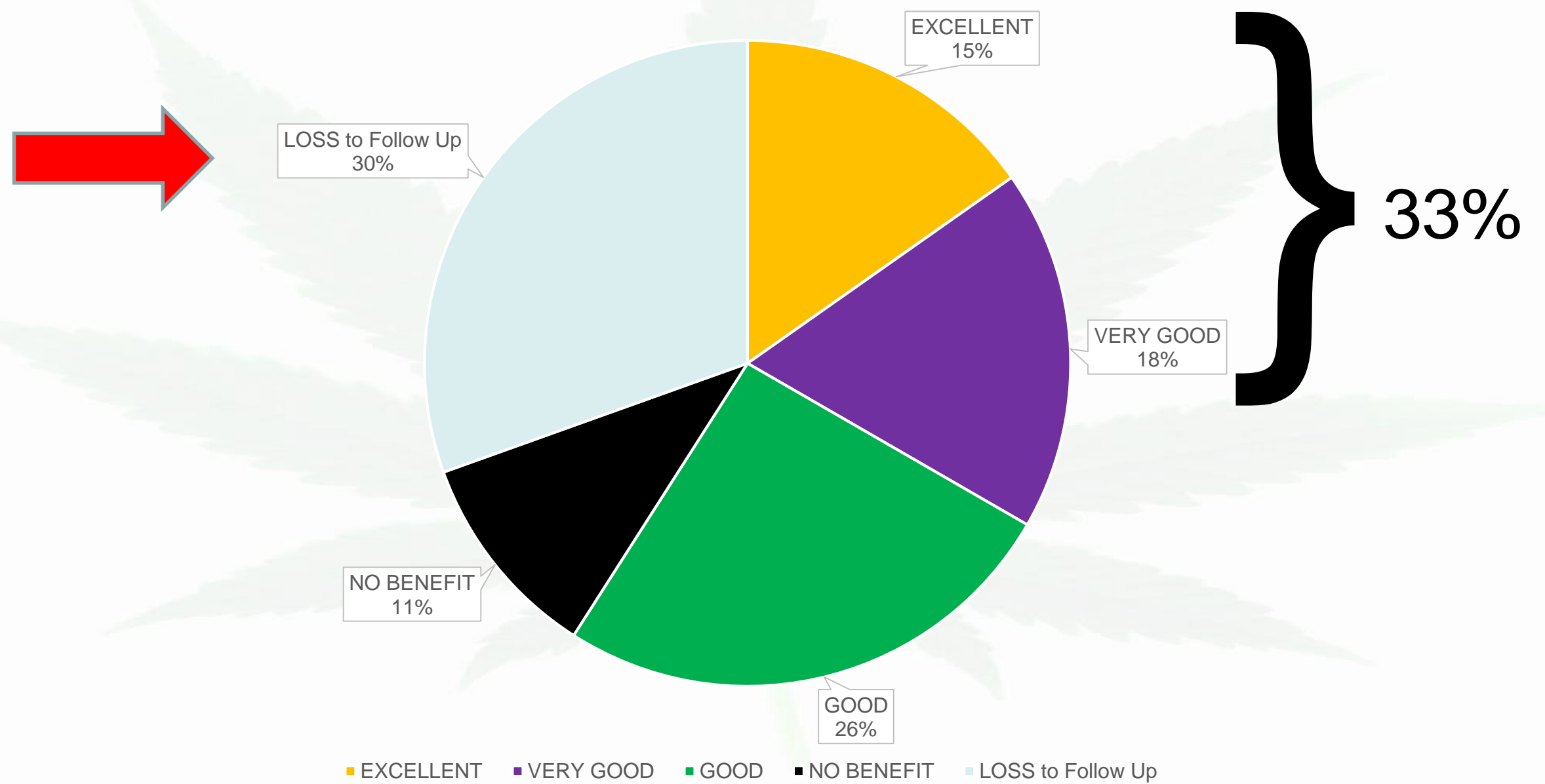
# NEUROLOGICAL SYMPTOMS 60 patients

- Seizures
- Autism spectrum with challenging behaviour, anxiety
- Parkinsons disease (with pain)
- Chronic fatigue
- Peripheral neuropathy
- Muscle spasms
- Multiple sclerosis
- Essential tremor etc.

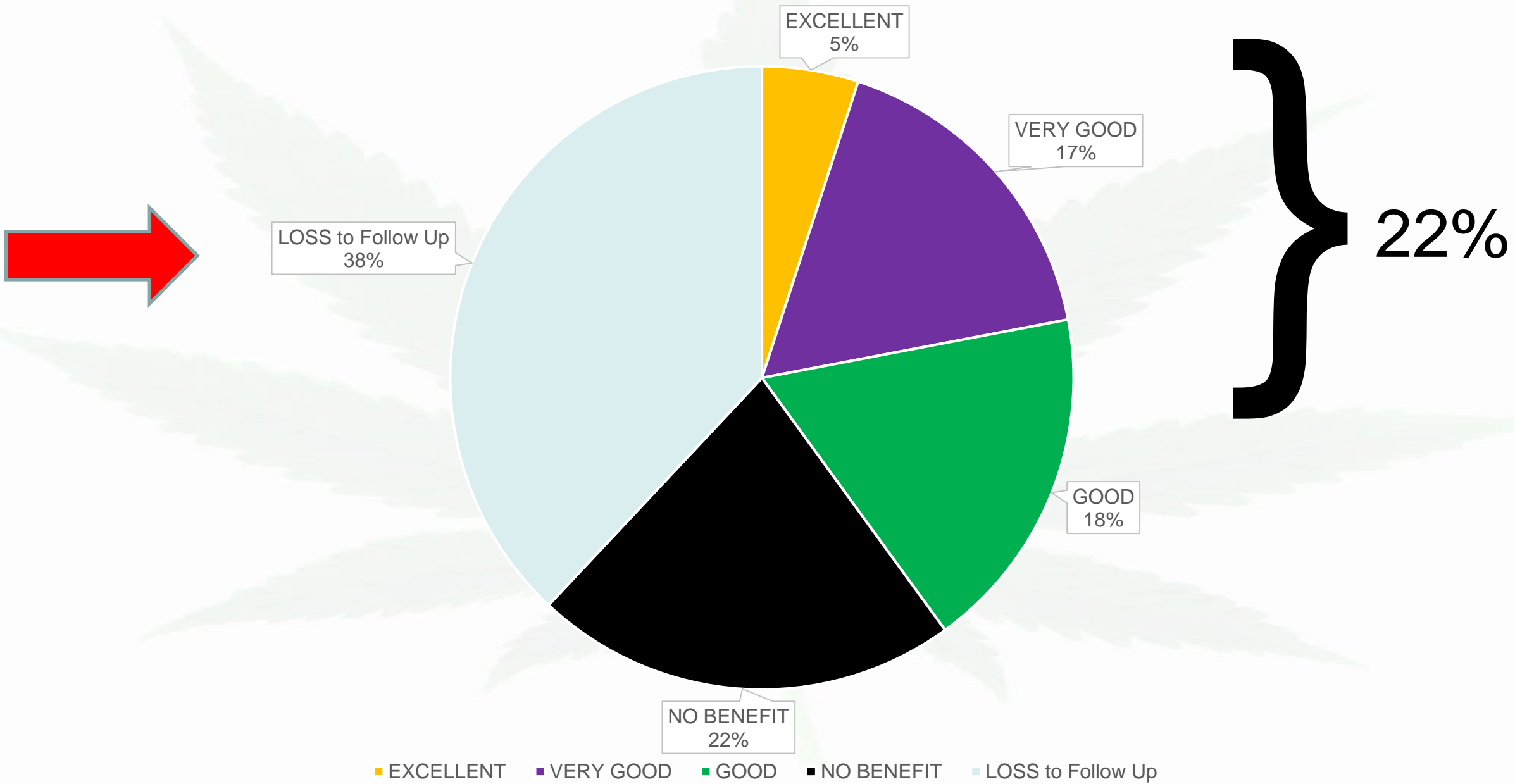
# PAIN N= 181, % Benefit



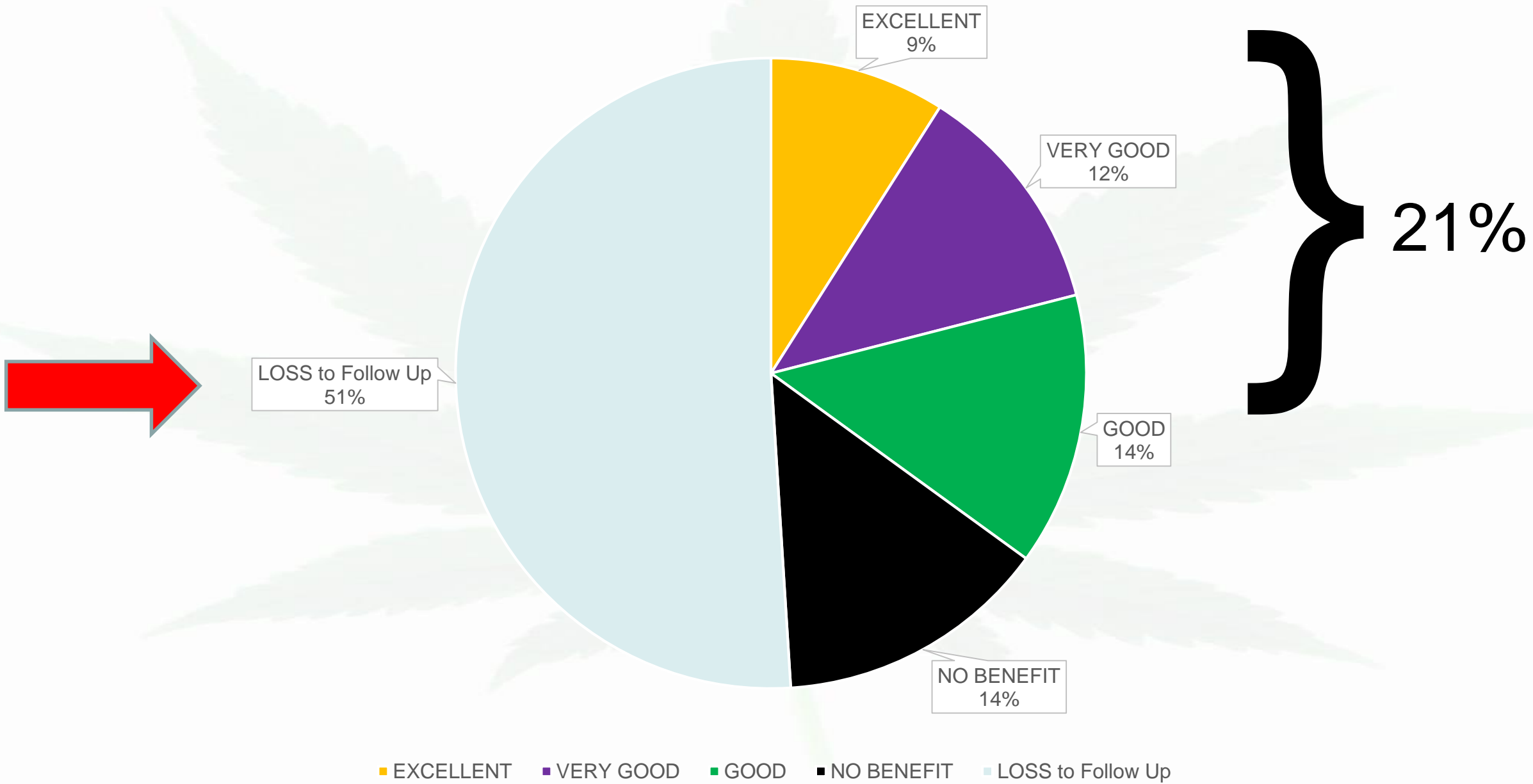
# EMOTIONAL DISTRESS N= 43, % Benefit



# NEUROLOGICAL N= 37, % Benefit



# CANCER SYMPTOMS N= 45, % Benefit



# CBD Audit

- Adverse effects 25 of 253 (10%) reported: sedation (5), vivid dreams (5), irritability (5), disorientation (3), nausea, diarrhoea, mouth irritation.
- Dose noted for 42%, 40 – 300mg/d
  - clinician impression is 100mg daily is often effective
- Follow up rate over 5 months
  - New patients 207
  - Follow up patients 116, 56%



Have you any patients who are 'stuck'?  
Conventional medicines just not working?

## CBD Good news & Bad news

- All NZ registered medical practitioners may prescribe CBD for any condition
- Chronic pain & chronic anxiety are a good place to start
- CBD not in Practice Management Software – add manually
- THC difficult to prescribe.

‘I don’t want to get high’

‘I just want relief from pain, nausea, insomnia, anxiety etc’

CBD is non-euphoriant, no risk of dependence, widely therapeutic, few adverse effects

‘Every patient deserves a chance to try CBD’.

# Prescribing medicinal cannabis

## 1. CBD products

2. Sativex – Approved condition

3. Sativex – Unapproved use

4. Pharmaceutical grade cannabis-based product without consent for distribution

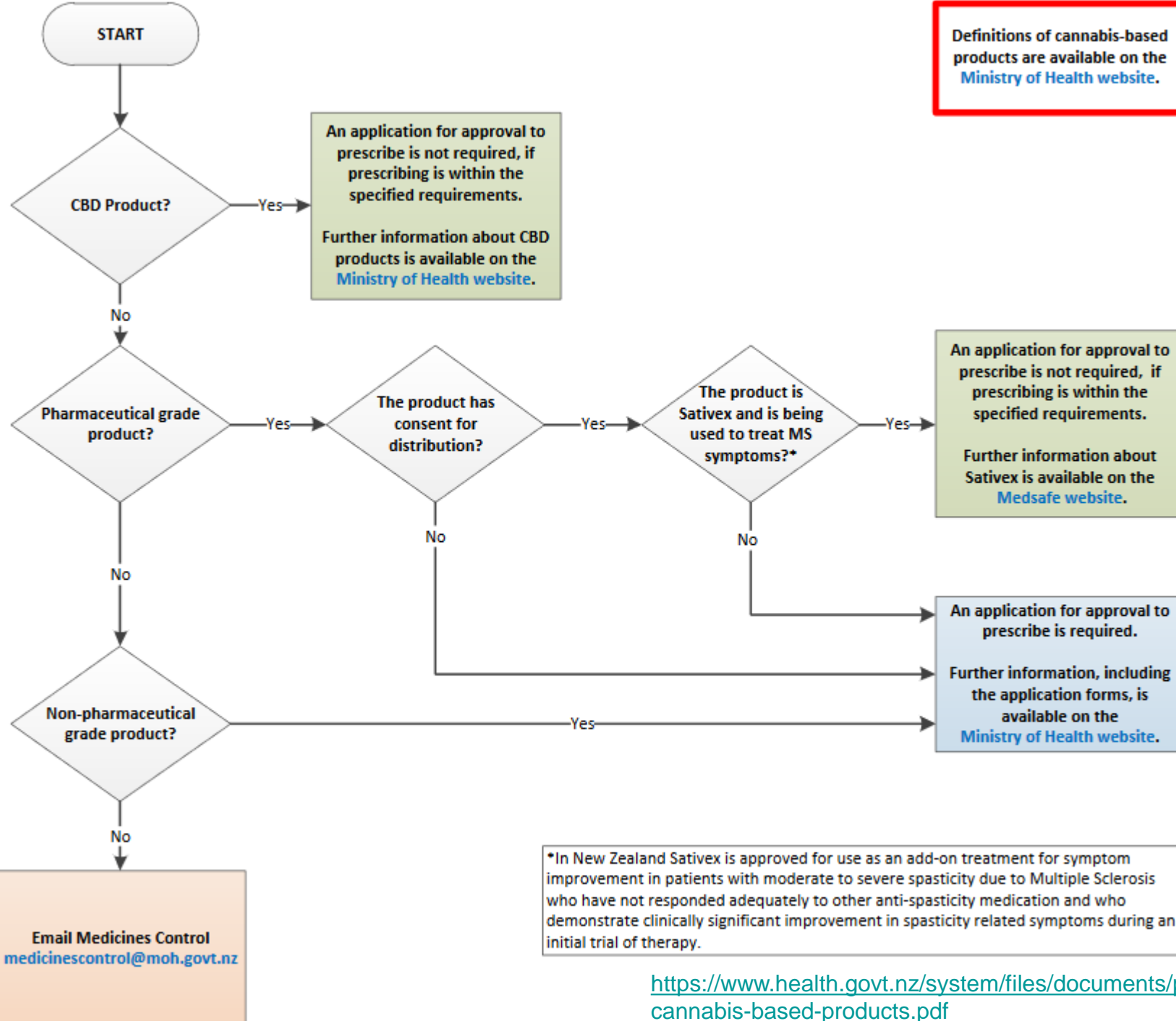
5. Non-pharmaceutical grade

6. Compassionate cannabis

# Summary of Approvals Required to Prescribe Cannabis Based Products



7 September 2017



These regulations, which came into force on  
7 September 2017,  
amend the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 1977

- allow CBD products to be supplied, administered, or prescribed without the approval of the Minister of Health...
- ie All NZ doctors may prescribe CBD.

# Products containing THC

- Products containing more than 2% THC require Specialist Application to Ministry of Health, approval usually 48 hours
- Regulations appear unnecessarily complicated.

- Standard prescription form
- CBD25 costs approx. \$120  
and CBD100 costs \$350 at the pharmacy, 25ml.
- They last about 1 month.
- The pharmacy orders them in from CDC Pharmaceuticals,  
Christchurch & they arrive the next day.
- Stable about 6 months out of the fridge.

**Dr GRAHAM GULBRANSEN**

West Care Specialist Centre, 131 Lincoln Rd, Auckland 0610  
 P: 09 836 9331 F: 836 9332 E: doctor@cannabiscare.nz

**Dr Graham Gulbransen**

NZMC Reg No.11258

HPI Facility: F3L701-B

Item Count:   
Subsidy Card: **Mr Mickey Mouse**

Apartment 99,235 Dominion Road,Mt Eden,CENTRAL AUCKLAND

M Ph:

W/H Ph: 838 9099, 555 2525

GMS: A3

DOB: 12 May 1980 NHI: ABC1235

**Rx**

6/04/2019

Dispense stat list medicines once only unless Frequent Dispense specified

**Tilray Cbd100 100mg/ml**

Sig: Take 0.25ml early evening. Increase as directed.

Contact person: Mick 838 9099

Mitte: 25 ml

Dr Graham Gulbransen \_\_\_\_\_



27HGC8GNXR8PV1B0T2

Tilray CBD oil has been  
available in NZ since 7/12/17





## Cannabis Oil Drops Titration Example\*

Day	Morning (mL)	Evening (mL)	Total Daily Dose (mL)
1 - 3	0	0.25	0.25
4 - 6	0.25	0.25	0.5
7 - 9	0.25	0.5	0.75
10 - 12	0.5	0.5	1
13 - 15	0.5	0.75	1.25
16 - 18	0.75	0.75	1.5
19 - 21	0.75	1	1.75

↓ \*\*

**To be filled out by patient:**

My optimal dose is \_\_\_\_\_ mL/day, taken (when/how often) \_\_\_\_\_

# CBD Drug-Drug Interactions

- Very unlikely in practice
- Clobazam levels may increase
- Ketoconazole
- Warfarin, monitor INR
- Domperidone?

## 6. Compassionate Cannabis

- Medical Cannabis Awareness NZ,  
<http://mcawarenessnz.org/>
- Questions about prescribing medicinal cannabis  
can be emailed to

[medicinescontrol@moh.govt.nz](mailto:medicinescontrol@moh.govt.nz)

<https://bpac.org.nz/2018/docs/cannabinoids.pdf>

# Misuse of Drugs (Medicinal Cannabis) Amendment Bill – 17 December 2018

- Introduce an exception and a statutory defence for terminally ill people to **possess and use illicit cannabis** and to possess a cannabis utensil

(1B) In this Act, a person requires palliation if, in the opinion of a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner, the person has an advanced progressive life-limiting condition and is nearing the end of their life.

## MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

Re: Certification of need for palliation under the Misuse of Drugs (Medicinal Cannabis) Amendment Act 2017.

I the undersigned certify that:

I examined [Patients name] of [address] on [date].

[Patients name] has an advanced progressive life-limiting condition and is nearing the end of their life.

[Patients name] requires palliation to ease their symptoms.

# Example template for the Certification of need for palliation under the Misuse of Drugs (Medicinal Cannabis) Amendment Act 2017

Date

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Certification of need for palliation under the Misuse of Drugs (Medicinal Cannabis) Amendment Act 2017.

I the undersigned certify that:

I examined [Patients name] of [address] on [date].

[Patients name] **has an advanced progressive life-limiting condition and is nearing the end of their life.**

[Patients name] requires palliation to ease their symptoms.

Name and designation of medical practitioner / nurse practitioner

Medical Council / Nursing Council Number

## Those amendments—

- allow a medical practitioner, a person who holds a licence to operate a pharmacy under the [Medicines Act 1981](#), or a person who holds a licence to deal in controlled drugs under the Act to import a CBD product without a licence to import the product and to possess and supply that CBD product:
- allow CBD products to be supplied, administered, or prescribed **without** the approval of the Minister of Health:

# Patient requests to import CBD

‘...if it is addressed to you, ensure it is appropriately labelled, less than three months' supply and accompanied by a prescription or letter from a New Zealand registered doctor that exactly matches the quantity, strength, and form of the imported medicine and shows the doctor is aware they are being imported. The prescription should be included inside the package, along with a certificate of analysis for the product or sufficient labelling to confirm it meets the definition of a prescription only CBD product.’

(MoH Advisor email to patient 5/2/19)

# Acknowledgements

- Presenters at the United in Compassion Australian Medicinal Cannabis Courses & Symposiums, 2017 & 2019
- Assoc Prof David Caldicott
- Prof Nick Lintzeris
- Dr Jeffrey Hergenrather
- Dr Viola Brugnatelli
- Justin Sinclair
- Dr Teresa Towpik



# Any Questions?

~NGA MIHI NUI~

Thank you.

Please note that I take questions and referrals

Video consultations available

[www.cannabiscare.nz](http://www.cannabiscare.nz)

[doctor@cannabiscare.nz](mailto:doctor@cannabiscare.nz)