

## **THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MISUSE OF DRUGS (ACMD) PUBLISHED ITS CONCLUSIONS INTO THE APPROPRIATE MAXIMUM CONTROLLED CANNABINOID LEVEL WITHIN CANNABIDIOL (CBD) “WELLNESS” PRODUCTS**

On 11<sup>th</sup> January this year the Minister of State for Crime and Policing, who is partly responsible for the criminal regulation of narcotics in the UK, asked the Advisory Committee on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) to make recommendations for an acceptable level of controlled cannabinoids within consumer Cannabidiol (CBD) products.

The ACMD has now reverted to the Minister and indicates that it has reached the following conclusions:

1. Extraction of controlled phytocannabinoids from consumer CBD products is unlikely to be a viable means of obtaining these drugs for illicit use;
2. It would be appropriate to set specific limits for the content of  $\Delta 9$ -THC and its precursor  $\Delta 9$ -THCA (i.e.  $\Delta 9$ -THCA-A and  $\Delta 9$ -THCA-B) in consumer CBD products;
3. Plant-derived consumer CBD products would not contain sufficient controlled phytocannabinoids (other than  $\Delta 9$ -THC) or their precursor acids to produce any pronounced psychoactive effects unless they were added to the product (i.e. spiked). To prevent the possibility of spiking a limit should be set for all controlled phytocannabinoids in consumer CBD products;
4. The dose limit for total  $\Delta 9$ -THC ( $\Delta 9$ -THC plus  $\Delta 9$ -THCA) should be 50 micrograms ( $\mu\text{g}$ ) in a unit of consumption (where a unit of consumption or ‘single serving’ is the typical quantity of a CBD product consumed on one occasion);
5. At the recommended levels the controlled phytocannabinoids present in consumer CBD products are highly unlikely to produce any harmful effects;

6. Setting a single concentration limit that applies to all consumer CBD products would not be appropriate;
7. Further research is needed to confirm whether conversion of CBD to  $\Delta^9$ -THC by extreme heating can occur and its relevance to the processes involved in CBD vaping evaluated;
8. Currently the methods for extraction, separation and quantification of controlled phytocannabinoids in consumer CBD products are not sufficiently robust with regards to sensitivity, accuracy and reproducibility; and,
9. Laboratories assessing compliance should be accredited to the ISO standard and producers should use laboratories which hold that accreditation to perform their quality assessment testing.

The ACMD has sought to apply these conclusions and had made the following **four recommendations** to provide a legal framework to control the amounts of phytocannabinoids in consumer CBD products under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971:

**Recommendation 1 (Emphasis added)**

- (i) That the total dose of  $\Delta^9$ -THC (including  $\Delta^9$ -THCA, as calculated using Equation 1 in the report) and all other controlled phytocannabinoids in consumer CBD products be controlled.
- (ii) **The dose of EACH controlled phytocannabinoid should not exceed 50 micrograms ( $\mu\text{g}$ ) per unit of consumption (defined as the typical quantity of a CBD product consumed on one occasion).**

### **Recommendation 2 (Emphasis added)**

- (i) That regulatory authorities ensure that **any consumer CBD product** permitted to market:
  - a. **has limits on the content of controlled phytocannabinoids;**
  - b. **such that the dose of  $\Delta 9$ -THC (including its precursor  $\Delta 9$ -THCA) and of EACH of the other controlled phytocannabinoids;**
  - c. **does not exceed 50 micrograms ( $\mu\text{g}$ ) per unit of consumption (defined as the typical quantity of a CBD product consumed on one occasion).**

### **Recommendation 3 (Emphasis added)**

A further inter laboratory comparison trial (ring trial) should be commissioned specifically to support the capability of testing laboratories to detect controlled phytocannabinoids below the recommended maximum levels in a representative range of consumer CBD products

#### **Recommendation 4**

That development of more accurate testing for controlled phytocannabinoids is supported to allow testing capabilities to develop and be fully regulated through:

- the development of standard protocols for the extraction, separation and quantification of controlled cannabinoids (and their precursor acids) from consumer CBD products which are of sufficient reproducibility and sensitivity to be appropriate for the measurement of the level of controlled phytocannabinoids as recommended in this report;
- the encouragement of suppliers of chemical reference materials to produce certified standards for those controlled cannabinoids for which standards are not currently available; and,
- the accreditation to ISO 17025:2017 of analytical methods used to ensure appropriate method validation, quality control and independent assessment of the methods.