

Cannabis Spray Research

GW Pharmaceuticals is a British pharmaceutical company licensed by the UK Home Office to work with cannabis (marijuana) for medical research purposes. It is a phyto-chemical company, meaning their research is conducted on plants and their medications are derived from plants. Their work on marijuana grew out of a 1997 report by the Science and Technology Committee of the House of Lords. The 1997 report had been written after concern arose regarding the increasing number of British multiple sclerosis (MS) patients being arrested for possession of marijuana.

GW is developing non-smoked prescription medicines derived from marijuana. They have been doing research on the medical efficacy of tincture of cannabis since 1999. Tincture of cannabis refers to alcohol infused with the chemicals found in the marijuana plant which are soluble in alcohol.

GW's cannabis plants are grown under secure computer-controlled conditions in six greenhouses located in a secret area near the South of England. Each of the greenhouses is home to a different strain of cannabis. Each greenhouse contains 10,000 marijuana plants and each of the 10,000 is a clone of the others in that greenhouse. This provides for standardization and consistency of their product.

The scientific standards applied to this cannabis product production and research is very deliberate. In the late 1920's and early 1930's, one of the reasons that cannabis-based medicines fell out of favor with physicians was because of lack of standardization. Also plant-based medication were seen as old fashioned. While there were prescribed dosages strength from batch to batch varied.

GW has dealt with that issue by producing standardized plants. They do this by cultivating consistent plant strains with defined chemical ratios. Their growing processes are monitored and strict quality controls are applied. The cultivation process ensures consistency of plant material suitable for pharmaceutical products.

GW's tincture of cannabis product composed of 50% from a strain high in THC for its therapeutic effect and CBD for its euphoric suppressive effect. The initial 50% research focus was on the relief of the pain and muscle spasms associated with both multiple sclerosis and neurological pain, than negative pain. Now they are looking at many other ailments.

GW has produced a tincture of cannabis product under the trade name Sativex. It is marketed in a metered sprayer. This sprayer helps prevent too frequent use. In April 2005, the Canadian federal health regulating agency, Health Canada, approved the sale of Sativex for the relief of pain in multiple sclerosis patients. Bayer HealthCare launched the marketing of Sativex in Canada in June 2005. Bayer has the exclusive marketing rights for Sativex in Canada and the U.K. In 2006, the FDA approved a clinical trial for Sativex in the United States.