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The ‘Devil drug [...] sprouting angel’s wings’? An analysis of the UK Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics’ use of patient identities to medicalise portrayals and perceptions of cannabis in the 1990s

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The ‘Devil drug [...] sprouting angel’s wings’? An analysis of the UK Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics’ use of patient identities to medicalise portrayals and perceptions of cannabis in the 1990s.¹

¹ Wellcome Library, London, SA/ACT/F/7, ‘Cannabis for cancer patients’, *Druglink*, November/ December 1995.

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Abbreviations:

ACT: Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics (UK)

ARM: Annual Representatives' Meeting

BMA: British Medical Association

MS: Multiple Sclerosis

Introduction

‘Because [cannabis is] associated with drug misuse, with hippies [...] it’s got this stigma attached to it as a recreational drug of rather undesirable people. [...] I regard it completely as a medicine’.²

This was Elizabeth Brice, arguing for the legalisation of cannabis for medicinal purposes on daytime television in 1995. The ‘stigma’ to which she referred was deep-rooted. The psychoactive drug, cannabis – containing over 60 compounds called ‘cannabinoids’ – was introduced into Britain as a multi-purpose medicine in the mid-19th Century. However, scientists’ initial failure to identify its active principle components meant that its medicinal use did not become widespread.³ Cannabis was incorporated into international drug control mechanisms, and its general use was banned in Britain from 1928.⁴ Its medical use was only prohibited in 1973, following a consolidation of drug control laws.⁵ However, as Taylor highlights, cannabis was already associated predominantly with drug misuse in the Anglo-American world by the 1950s.⁶ From the 1950s on, the cannabis-smoking subcultures of the ‘Beats’, then the ‘hippies’, inspired an association between cannabis and the unemployed and unproductive.⁷ This was reproduced in comic films such as Cheech and Chong’s ‘Up in Smoke’.⁸ The largely conservative British press also portrayed cannabis smoking as dangerous: a cause of psychological pathologies and cancer, and a ‘gateway’ to consuming ‘harder’ drugs such as heroin.⁹ Searches of *The Times*, *Daily Mail*, and *Daily Telegraph* online archives revealed only three, three and five articles respectively which (briefly) mentioned cannabis’s medicinal qualities, between 1980 and 1991; far more articles associated cannabis with danger

² Wellcome Library, London (hereafter WL), SA/ACT/G/17, *Kilroy*, BBC 1, 18 December 1995, 24:03.

³ Virginia Berridge, *Demons: Our changing attitudes to alcohol, tobacco & drugs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 133-4, 214.

⁴ James Mills, *Cannabis nation: control and consumption in Britain, 1928-2008* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 10.

⁵ Suzanne Taylor, ‘Re-medicalizing cannabis: science, medicine and policy, 1973 to the early twenty-first century’ (doctoral thesis, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, 2010), 3 <<http://researchonline.lshtm.ac.uk/834551/1/550389.pdf>> [accessed 25 April 2018].

⁶ Suzanne Taylor, 7.

⁷ Martin Booth, *Cannabis: A History* (New York: Random House, 2011), 290-1, 304-6.

⁸ *Up in Smoke*, dir. by Lou Adler (Paramount Pictures, 1978).

⁹ Suzanne Taylor, 31-2; Neville Hodgkinson, ‘How safe IS pot? The verdict of today’, *Daily Mail*, 19 Jan 1980, 7.

and criminality.¹⁰ This was despite notable developments in cannabis research, such as the 1988 discovery of cannabinoid receptors in the brain, which shed light on cannabis's mode of action.¹¹

The stigma attached to cannabis, and ignorance regarding its medicinal qualities, were directly confronted by Brice – a middle-aged mother-of-two from Leeds who used cannabis to manage symptoms of her multiple sclerosis (MS).¹² In 1992, within a context of growing interest in alternative medicines, rising convictions for cannabis possession and proliferating patient activism, Brice founded the Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics UK (ACT), assisted by other MS sufferers.¹³ Drawing its name from an independent American organisation established in 1981, the British ACT campaigned for the re-legalisation of medicinal cannabis in the UK, and for further research into cannabis therapeutics. Synthetic cannabinoid medicines, such as nabilone, existed, but were only licensed for anti-emetic use during chemotherapy, and were deemed less effective than 'natural' cannabis by the ACT. The organisation was patient-led – managed by Brice – and had no formal membership, although it courted and coordinated support from doctors, politicians and patients with diverse conditions. The ACT's supporters lobbied Parliament and contributed testimony to inquiries into cannabis's therapeutic value by the British Medical Association (BMA) and House of Lords.¹⁴ However, perhaps their most fundamental campaigning occurred in the media. Here, they sought to generate momentum for their cause through 'medicalising' cannabis – destigmatising the drug's therapeutic use by depicting it as a legitimate, necessary medicine. Theirs was the only such media campaign, making it crucial. As Brice noted, other changes, political and medical, seemed largely to flow from the destigmatisation and popular support cultivated by ACT media publicity.¹⁵ Moreover, destigmatisation was valuable in itself. As patients noted, being conceptualised as 'criminal' was traumatic.¹⁶ Indeed, Brice campaigned under the pseudonym 'Clare Hodges' to protect her family from prejudice.¹⁷ This dissertation therefore does not explore all facets of the ACT's

¹⁰ Based on a search of the *Times*, *Telegraph* and *Daily Mail* online archives, on 24 April 2018. Date range: 1980-91. Keywords: 'cannabis', 'marijuana', 'medical', 'medicine'. Each search result was examined to identify genuine references to medical cannabis.

¹¹ Suzanne Taylor, 103, 107.

¹² WL, SA/ACT/F/5, Clare Hodges, 'I wish I could get it at the chemist's', *Independent*, 23 February 1993.

¹³ Suzanne Taylor, 27; Mills, 182-3, 223.

¹⁴ Suzanne Taylor, 185-201.

¹⁵ WL, SA/ACT/D/2, Elizabeth Brice, *ACT Diary*, November 1994.

¹⁶ WL, SA/ACT/F/8, Alison Handley, 'This woman is in constant pain. The only drug that can help is ILLEGAL', *Birmingham Evening Mail*, 4 August 1997.

¹⁷ WL, SA/ACT/B/23, Elizabeth Brice, fax to Geoffrey Guy, 4 February 1998.

campaigning. Its focus is the pertinent question: how did the ACT seek to medicalise portrayals and perceptions of cannabis in Britain using the media, and how successful were its efforts?

The answer to this question shall fill a historiographical lacuna. Most histories of cannabis in the 20th Century only cover its medicinal status relatively briefly, within wider narratives focusing primarily on the rise of cannabis's general consumption and prohibition across broad periods. Mills, for example, studying Britain from 1928 to 2008, covers key themes such as cannabis's incorporation into drug control laws, and later complications as its usage expanded under a control system not designed to cope with widespread consumption.¹⁸ Where historians do substantially focus on medical cannabis, most accounts of the 20th Century do not centre primarily on the UK context, instead concentrating on America. Thus, Aldrich charts the rise of American medicinal cannabis usage after the 1950s and the US ACT's efforts to secure patients legal access through the courts.¹⁹ This dissertation therefore contributes towards filling a fledgling historiographical space, outlined in Taylor's PhD thesis, comprising dedicated histories of medical cannabis in late 20th Century Britain. Taylor's work charts how scientific and policy-making developments facilitated a growing interest in therapeutic cannabis. Ultimately, the British Medical Association (BMA), in 1997, and House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, in 1998, actively endorsed cannabis research, and the British company, GW Pharmaceuticals, began developing medicines using cannabis extract.²⁰ Taylor notes that the ACT was significant in generating media attention for cannabis therapeutics in the 1990s, but does not explore her assertion in any depth.²¹ This dissertation elucidates the ACT's role in raising the media profile of therapeutic cannabis and shaping popular opinions in the UK. The result shall contribute towards explaining the favourable climate which helped to facilitate high-profile medical and political endorsements of therapeutic cannabis.

This dissertation also provides a pertinent empirical contribution to the historiography of patient activism. While popular topics of study have included AIDS and breast cancer activism,

¹⁸ Mills.

¹⁹ Michael Aldrich, 'History of Therapeutic Cannabis' in Mary Lynn Mathre (ed.), *Cannabis in Medical Practice: A Legal, Historical and Pharmacological Overview of the Therapeutic Use of Marijuana* (London: Carload & Co., 1997), 49-52.

²⁰ Suzanne Taylor, 3.

²¹ Suzanne Taylor, 194.

medical cannabis activism stands relatively neglected.²² What follows is its first dedicated history covering late 20th-Century Britain. This dissertation also offers a theoretical contribution to the historiography. Histories of activism commonly highlight patients' agency and explore tactics deployed to help secure desired changes. For example, Epstein has described US AIDS activists' efforts to facilitate accelerated drug development by staging demonstrations which attracted media attention and pressured authorities.²³ However, the practical significance of activists' distinctive patient identities remains under-explored. A 'patient identity' is a set of characteristics which members of a society perceive to be associated with patients.²⁴ Multiple patient identities can apply simultaneously, with blurred boundaries. While historians have highlighted occasions when activists have rejected a patient identity associated with passivity, little attention has focused on examining how activists have used patient identities to their advantage.²⁵ Mold's work is a rare exception. She describes how patients have used their position as health service consumers – the patient-consumer identity – to legitimise campaigns surrounding issues such as the patient's right to be consulted on participation in medical teaching.²⁶

This essay explores in more breadth and depth the utility of patient identities in historical activism. It shall examine four identities, termed the 'medical patient' (incorporating Mold's patient-consumer), the 'ordinary patient', the 'suffering patient', and the 'expert patient'. Chapter one analyses ACT media coverage to explore how its supporters used patient identities to construct cannabis as a legitimate medicine. Chapter two describes how their cultivation of patient identities enabled them to attract the media coverage through which they disseminated their medicalised depictions of cannabis. In culmination, Chapter three illustrates the ACT's success in disseminating its medicalised portrayal of cannabis throughout the media, and influencing popular perceptions of the drug.

²² Steven Epstein, *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1996); Ellen Leopold, *A Darker Ribbon: Breast Cancer, Women, And Their Doctors in the Twentieth Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).

²³ Epstein, 97, 220.

²⁴ "identity", *OED Online*, March 2018 <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/91004?redirectedFrom=identity>> [accessed 25 April 2018].

²⁵ David France, *How to Survive a Plague: The Story of How Activists and Scientists Tamed AIDS* (Croydon: Picador, 2016), 108.

²⁶ Alex Mold, *Making the Patient-Consumer: Patient Organisations and Health Consumerism in Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 25-32.

Overall, therefore, this dissertation demonstrates that the ACT used patient identities as potent ‘symbolic resources’ with which it successfully popularised a narrative legitimising cannabis as a genuine medicine, thereby winning popular sympathy, reducing stigma and helping to facilitate developments in cannabis therapeutics.

Methodology

In elucidating the aforementioned argument, this dissertation employs the concept of the ‘symbolic resource’ from Bourdieu’s sociological theory, as elucidated by Crossley. The concept refers to the way that ‘statuses and reputations’ can have practical ‘value’ in certain contexts.²⁷ Thus, the ACT drew from pre-existing and potential cultural associations linking patients to certain characteristics. They transformed these patient identities into symbolic resources through discursively reproducing them in the context of promoting a medicalised depiction of cannabis, and emphasising certain aspects to suit this purpose. The dissertation also draws from media theory in exploring the dynamics behind the ACT’s use of patient identities to appeal to the media.

The Wellcome Library’s Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics collection formed this dissertation’s main source base. It was catalogued in 2012, and no published work has consulted it. Elizabeth Brice compiled and donated the collection. Most notably, it contains her diaries, press cuttings, video recordings of television appearances, correspondence and notes. All examples of ACT media coverage referenced in the collection were collated into a table of key details to facilitate quantitative and qualitative assessments of the ACT’s media reach.²⁸ Small sections of the collection were closed under data protection laws; however all accessible parts were examined, to avoid missing key details. Brice’s Diary is ‘restricted’, so references to its material had to be anonymised and, where there was uncertainty, approved by an archivist before inclusion below. To obtain alternative perspectives, and ensure that the collection does not exclude crucial details, its sources were corroborated using available secondary literature, five original oral history interviews and an email interview. As Perks and Thompson note, the fallibility and partiality of memory is unavoidable.²⁹ To compensate, interview details were

²⁷ Nick Crossley, *Making Sense of Social Movements* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2002), 178.

²⁸ Appendix, Figure 1.

²⁹ Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, ‘Interpreting memories: introduction’, in Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1998), 211.

cross-checked with one another, secondary literature and the ACT collection's contemporary sources, allowing them to fill one another's gaps and reveal their inaccuracies.

Chapter One: Medicalising Cannabis

To begin, this section outlines how the ACT discursively deployed four key patient identities in its media coverage to construct a narrative legitimising the use of cannabis as a medicine. Most of the ACT's media coverage comprised interviews and references by journalists, supplemented by pieces written by supporters. In 1996-7, two members of London advertising agency, McCann Erickson, developed ACT advertising materials such as posters, free of charge, in collaboration with Brice, which were released in April 1997.³⁰ This section deploys representative examples from a broad cross-section of ACT media appearances between 1992 and 2000, to show that the ACT's discursive strategies remained reasonably consistent over time and between supporters.

The Medical Patient

The most fundamental patient identity that the ACT cultivated was that of the medical patient. As sociologists such as Armstrong have stressed, the 'patient' identity itself is largely a medical construct, essential within physicians' everyday discourse.³¹ The ACT's supporters exploited this axiomatic association between patients and modern medicine – the medical patient identity – to frame their cannabis use as a legitimate 'medical' activity.

Firstly, the ACT's supporters portrayed themselves as constituting, or representing, genuine medical patients. As Dumit emphasises, medical conditions vary in how far they are perceived as legitimate objects of medical attention and granted 'social recognition'.³² Thus, as Brice affirmed in a press release, '[t]he patients' organisation ACT' concerned itself exclusively with campaigning for 'seriously ill patients', with medically well-established conditions.³³ Indeed, in media appearances, the ACT's patient supporters all clearly stated the serious condition from which they suffered. For the ACT's earliest members – Brice, Elizabeth MacRory and Bill

³⁰ Chris Aldhous, interview by author, 12 February 2018.

³¹ David Armstrong, 'The patient's view', *Social Science and Medicine*, 18 (1984), 743.

³² Joseph Dumit, 'Illnesses you have to fight to get: facts as forces in uncertain, emergent illnesses', *Social Science and Medicine*, 62 (2006), 578.

³³ WL, SA/ACT/B/6, ACT, 'ACT response to the BMA report on the therapeutic uses of cannabis' [Press release], 14 November 1997.

Thornton-Smith – this was MS.³⁴ ACT supporter Carol Howard stated the fact that her daughter suffered with lymphatic cancer.³⁵ Supporters also described their clinical symptoms and conventional medications. For example, Brice reported ‘poor bladder control [...] pains and spasms, nausea, bad balance and poor vision’.³⁶ She highlighted that she was prescribed ‘a whole range of medicines’ in an attempt to combat these.³⁷

Having established their archetypal medical patient identity, the ACT's supporters generated a medicalised depiction of cannabis by discursively linking this identity to their cannabis usage, in three key ways. Firstly, they described cannabis's relief of specific clinical symptoms. For example, Nicholas Beddow, another MS sufferer associated with the ACT, noted that ‘within half-an-hour of taking it [spinal] pain goes. It also relaxes my nerves’.³⁸ Secondly, the ACT used language associated with conventional medicines to describe their administration of cannabis, with Brice referring to this as taking a ‘small dose’.³⁹ Thirdly, the ACT explicitly compared cannabis with equivalent prescription medications, emphasising cannabis's superiority. Brice explained how her ‘pills to relieve bladder spasms’ made her feel ‘sick and gave [her] blurred vision’, whereas cannabis had no adverse short-term side-effects.⁴⁰ For Geoff Vincent, another ACT supporter and MS sufferer, cannabis was superior because it acted simultaneously as ‘a tranquilliser, a sleeping tablet and a painkiller’.⁴¹

The ACT's supporters added weight to this medicalised depiction of cannabis by mobilising patient-consumer rhetoric. This rhetoric justified demands from health services using the fact that the patient, as their consumer, had certain rights. In Britain, such rhetoric was forged by patient groups in the 1960s. By the 1990s, it was used in governmental health policy guidelines, and centred around the individual's rights – for example, the right to choice within health services.⁴² The ACT's supporters exploited this new orthodoxy privileging patient choice, using their medical patient status to construct themselves as important authorities on whether

³⁴ WL, SA/ACT/F/5, Terry James, ‘Breaking the law to beat MS’, *Yorkshire Post*, 27 September 1993; WL, SA/ACT/F/5, Bill Thornton-Smith, ‘Managing disease with cannabis’, *Independent*, 24 February 1993.

³⁵ WL, SA/ACT/F/5, Carol Howard, ‘A pain too great for us to endure’, *Style (Sunday Times)*, 5 March 1995.

³⁶ WL, SA/ACT/F/9, Tamsin Kelly, ‘I’m a normal mum but I take cannabis’, *Woman's Own*, 25 August 1997.

³⁷ Hodges, ‘chemist’s’.

³⁸ WL, SA/ACT/G/8, *This Morning*, ITV, 17 April 1997, 00:36.

³⁹ WL, SA/ACT/G/11, *It's Your Shout*, ITV, 1 June 1995, 21:08.

⁴⁰ Hodges, ‘chemist’s’.

⁴¹ WL, SA/ACT/F/7, Neil Curtis, ‘ACTing for change’, *Nursing Standard*, 7 June 1995.

⁴² Mold, 110, 143.

cannabis had medical value. Thus, Brice declared that cannabis's benefits 'are not hard for me to see [...] I don't need a man in a white coat to interpret it all for me.'⁴³ Andrew Coldwell, another MS sufferer and ACT supporter, similarly stressed that 'my medical treatment [...] should be left to me, the patient.'⁴⁴ Thus, the ACT pieced together the fundamentals of a counter-discourse in which cannabis was neither dangerous nor recreational but medicinal, because it was used and deemed as such by medical patients.

The Ordinary Patient

With these foundations laid, the ACT deployed other patient identities to reinforce the legitimacy of its medicalised portrayal of cannabis. As John Bowis, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health from 1993-6, noted at interview: '[w]e're all patients, in some shape or form'.⁴⁵ The ordinary patient represents this identification of the patient with the average, 'ordinary' citizen, which derives from the fact that anybody can fall ill. The ACT's supporters deliberately cultivated an ordinary patient identity which reflected a 'respectable', middle-class vision of 'ordinariness'. This supported their medicalised portrayal of cannabis by drawing their cannabis usage further from the frame of drug abuse and into the 'respectable' mould appropriate for a legitimate medicine.

The ACT's patient supporters constructed themselves as 'respectable', ordinary patients in three primary ways. Firstly, Brice and Coldwell referred to themselves explicitly as 'respectable'.⁴⁶ Indeed, Brice stressed that the ACT was not 'a crowd of dope smokers... [w]e take cannabis because we need to'.⁴⁷ Secondly, supporters often highlighted their otherwise conventional, middle-class lifestyles and beliefs. Brice portrayed herself as comfortable within the conventional gendered sphere of the 'suburban housewife', stressing that her 'world was mothers and toddlers'.⁴⁸ Other supporters highlighted their respectable middle-class careers: Thornton-Smith was an ex-army officer; Coldwell was an ex-engineer.⁴⁹ Some supporters stressed their links to conventional organised religion. Beddow revealed that he was an

⁴³ Hodges, 'chemist's'.

⁴⁴ Andrew Coldwell, 'Cannabis Plea', *Evening Courier*, 17 Oct 1997.

⁴⁵ John Bowis, interview by author, 12 March 2018.

⁴⁶ Kelly.

⁴⁷ WL, SA/ACT/F/11, Ann Kent, 'These women could be the first to take cannabis legally – but should they be allowed?', *Daily Mail*, 19 January 1999.

⁴⁸ WL, SA/ACT/F/10, Diane Taylor, 'I smoke pot to ease my MS pain', *Mirror*, 20 April 2000.

⁴⁹ Curtis.

Anglican vicar, and appeared on television wearing his clerical uniform to promote cannabis's medical value.⁵⁰ Indeed, thirdly, supporters displayed their respectability through physical appearances. In photographs and on television, Brice never failed to appear well-dressed, with short, neatly-cut hair – far from the unkempt appearance of stereotypical drug abusers.⁵¹

The ACT's supporters often also depicted their cannabis usage itself as 'respectable', and consistent with their ordinary patient status. Although many supporters smoked cannabis, the ACT generally preferred to highlight modes of administration not associated with health risks or drug culture. Herbal tea – associated with nourishment and domesticity – became a key symbol of the ACT's cannabis consumption, and Brice allowed herself to be photographed on numerous occasions holding a teapot or mug.⁵² With similar connotations of innocent domesticity, Beddow highlighted his consumption of cannabis in 'marmite sandwiches'.⁵³

The ACT deployed several of these methods of displaying respectability synergistically in its April 1997 advertising campaign. External copywriter Chris Aldhous explained at interview how the vision of he and Peter Hodgson, who produced the visuals, aligned with the ACT's attempt to cultivate a respectable, ordinary patient image for its supporters.⁵⁴ For example, one poster displayed a cannabis leaf being dipped into a teacup, stating that '[t]o escape the pain of chronic arthritis, Mrs Taylor is breaking the law'.⁵⁵ As Aldhous recounted, 'Mrs Taylor' represented the average, middle-class ACT supporter, who drank cannabis in herbal tea for symptom relief. He explained that 'you're putting Mrs Taylor as an alternative' to recreational drug abusers, 'you're creating a counter-narrative that challenges the prevailing narrative of what cannabis is about.'⁵⁶

⁵⁰ WL, SA/ACT/G/9, *Channel 5 News*, Channel 5, 4 April 1997, 01:12.

⁵¹ *This Morning*, 17 April 1997; WL, SA/ACT/G/13, *London Tonight*, ITV, 1 March 1993.

⁵² For example, Kelly; WL, SA/ACT/F/11, Nigel Hawkes, "Drug 'relieves spasms'", *The Times*, 14 December 1999.

⁵³ *This Morning*, 17 April 1997, 00:15.

⁵⁴ Aldhous, interview.

⁵⁵ WL, SA/ACT/G/2, ACT, 'To escape the pain of chronic arthritis, Mrs. Taylor is breaking the law.'
[Promotional poster], 1996.

⁵⁶ Aldhous, interview.

The Suffering Patient

As well as framing their cannabis usage as ‘medical’ and ‘respectable’, the ACT added another layer to their medicalisation of cannabis, using the suffering patient identity. This overlaps with the medical patient identity, except here, the patient is identified primarily not with the technical language and procedures of medicine, but within an emotive register of human suffering resulting from illness. By constructing their cannabis usage within this frame, the ACT emphasised that cannabis was medicinal because it alleviated suffering and improved quality of life in a holistic, humanitarian sense. This aligned with contemporary medicine’s widely-shared core value of holistic ‘caring’.⁵⁷

To establish their identity as suffering patients, the ACT’s patient supporters highlighted three layers of suffering inflicted by their illnesses. The first comprised vivid descriptions of physical suffering. As Brice emphasised, MS is ‘a completely horrible disease’ which ‘affects your whole body so that you can’t think, see, eat, sleep or move properly.’⁵⁸ Secondly, supporters illustrated how their illnesses impacted on their wider lives and aspirations. Brice recalled how she needed a walking stick and could ‘no longer drive’ because her vision was impaired.⁵⁹ Coldwell mentioned that his ‘illness forced him to give up work’.⁶⁰ Thirdly, the ACT highlighted the psychological suffering caused by physical suffering and debility. Elizabeth MacRory declared that contemporary medicine’s apparent inability to relieve her ‘unrelenting symptoms’ induced a ‘[h]opelessness which [...] is indescribable and often gives rise to depression and despair.’⁶¹

With this suffering patient identity established, the ACT’s supporters used it to frame their cannabis consumption in holistically medicinal terms. They therefore highlighted its role in improving their overall quality of life by reducing physical debility. Vincent noted that cannabis enabled him to ‘walk on [full-length walking] sticks’ again instead of elbow sticks.⁶² This improved his mobility, allowing him ‘to do things [he] was just beginning to not be able

⁵⁷ Richard Smith, ‘Medicine’s core values’, *British Medical Journal*, 309 (1994), 1247.

⁵⁸ Diane Taylor, ‘pot’.

⁵⁹ WL, SA/ACT/F/4, Clare Hodges, ‘Very Alternative Medicine’, *Spectator*, 1 August 1992.

⁶⁰ Elayne DeLaurian, ‘Why we break the law every day’, *News of the World*, June 1997.

⁶¹ WL, SA/ACT/F/4, Elizabeth MacRory, ‘Pot luck denied’, *Spectator*, 21 Nov 1992.

⁶² WL, SA/ACT/G/7, *The Link*, ITV, February 1995, 01:23.

to do.’⁶³ The ACT also highlighted cannabis’s role in alleviating psychological suffering. Anne Biezanek was a general practitioner, who became an avid ACT supporter after being prosecuted for providing her daughter Lucy with cannabis to help her schizophrenia. Biezanek claimed that ‘[t]he way it brightened Lucy’s mood’ was ‘incredible’.⁶⁴ Beyond cannabis’s psychoactive effects, lifestyle improvements also reduced psychological trauma. As Brice emphasised, ‘MS makes you feel helpless, but taking cannabis has given me back some control. Now I don’t feel frightened for the future.’⁶⁵

Thus, the ACT affirmed cannabis’s medicinal status by illustrating its power to relieve suffering. The sobering tones cultivated through discussing suffering also supported cannabis’s medicalisation by distancing the ACT’s media coverage from comic portrayals of cannabis as the pleasurable indulgence of hippie-inspired subcultures. Furthermore, the suffering patient identity enabled the ACT to subvert grave anti-drugs portrayals of cannabis’s dangers by generating an equally grave counter-narrative in which the withholding of cannabis, rather than the consumption of drugs, was the central moral failing. As Vincent stressed: ‘[t]o withhold it is immoral if it can help someone.’⁶⁶ Indeed, in the ACT’s narrative, cannabis’s illegality not only prolonged but compounded patients’ suffering, meaning that they had ‘to deal with... unscrupulous people to get it’, who ‘conned’ them.⁶⁷ Illegally-acquired cannabis was often also expensive and of uncertain quality.⁶⁸ Worst of all, prosecution caused patients and carers great trauma, with Biezanek declaring that, despite her eventual acquittal, the two years after ‘the police first raided [her] house’ were ‘agony.’⁶⁹

The Expert Patient

To add weight to its framing of cannabis as a respectable medicinal substance and humanitarian necessity, the ACT cultivated the *expert patient identity*. By the 1980s, an ‘expert patient’ rhetoric, stressing chronic patients’ capacity to become ‘experts’ in managing their conditions,

⁶³ *Link*, February 1995, 01:14.

⁶⁴ WL, SA/ACT/F/8, Justine Morris, ‘Why I had to give my daughter illegal drugs’, *Realm*, [1995].

⁶⁵ Kelly.

⁶⁶ *Link* February 1995, 01.59-02:04.

⁶⁷ WL, SA/ACT/F/5, Celia Hall, ‘Users report relief from symptoms of illness’, *Independent*, 7 February 1993.

⁶⁸ WL, SA/ACT/F/1, Christina Hardyment, ‘Out of the closet?’, *Rx (Sunday Telegraph)*, 6 April 1997; Hodges, ‘chemist’s’.

⁶⁹ WL, SA/ACT/F/2, Alasdair Palmer, ‘Duress of Circumstances’, *Spectator*, 23 October 1993.

existed in America and was increasing in prominence.⁷⁰ Moreover, by the 1990s, patients' own experiences of illness were widely acknowledged as constituting a legitimate form of 'expert' knowledge which could inform medical teaching and health service delivery.⁷¹ ACT supporters sought to further legitimise their medicalised portrayal of cannabis by positioning themselves within this increasingly prominent expert patient mould, which identified patients with the ability to acquire and provide authoritative information about their illnesses.

One way in which the ACT established its expert patient identity was by emphasising the authority with which it represented patients' views and experiences more widely. Brice did this by discursively deploying letters received by the ACT, in two key ways. Firstly, Brice used the volume of letters to demonstrate that therapeutic cannabis was a pertinent issue for many patients. Thus, she claimed in 1998 that the ACT had received 'more than 2,000 letters', mainly from patients asking for information about medical cannabis.⁷² Secondly, Brice deployed the letters to emphasise the representativeness of her experience of cannabis's therapeutic benefits. Brice claimed that by 1998, 'about 250 people [had] written explaining how cannabis [...] helped them'.⁷³ This emphasis on the ACT's accumulation of anecdotal evidence promoted it as a legitimate 'expert' authority on patients' experiences with cannabis. Brice illustrated this by making generalised statements about patients' cannabis usage, such as that '[s]ome people cook it in cakes or take it in tea, but it takes longer to work that way'.⁷⁴

The ACT's patient supporters also cultivated their *expert patient* status from another angle. They affirmed the 'expert' authoritativeness of their anecdotal accounts by deploying two types of contextual information. Firstly, they used medico-scientific information. For example, on *London Tonight*, Brice stressed the importance of therapeutic cannabis by citing 'the standard medical textbook [...] *McAlpine's Multiple Sclerosis*', which stated that 'the alternatives are disappointing'.⁷⁵ She also maintained that there was 'a scientific basis' for the ACT's claims regarding cannabis's therapeutic efficacy, because although 'there haven't been a lot of trials

⁷⁰ Yue Xiao, 'The "expert patient" approach for non-communicable disease management in low and middle income settings: When the reality confronts the rhetoric', *Chronic Diseases and Translational Medicine* 1 (2015), 146.

⁷¹ Maria Feijoo-Cid et al., 'Expert patient illness narratives as a teaching methodology: A mixed method study of student nurses satisfaction', *Nurse Education Today* 50 (2017), 1.

⁷² WL, SA/ACT/F/10, Allan Gill, 'The Pot v Pain Debate', *Evening Standard*, 24 March 1998.

⁷³ Gill.

⁷⁴ Diane Taylor, 'pot'.

⁷⁵ *London Tonight*, 1 March 1993, 02:48-02:51.

[...] trials that have been done have all been favourable.⁷⁶ Secondly, supporters used historical information to substantiate their accounts. In correspondence with Thornton-Smith, Brice noted that a key point to make at interview was that ‘cannabis has... been used medically for thousands of years.’⁷⁷ On television, Brice deployed her historical interpretation of why cannabis was removed from prescription to challenge this decision’s validity. She maintained that cannabis was removed ‘not because of any medical problems, but because it became associated with drug misuse’ and ‘other drugs came into market’, but these turned out to have more adverse side-effects.⁷⁸

As well as deploying this information, Brice actively recruited doctors who wished to assist the ACT and advocate its cause, to further enhance the ‘expert’ authority of its patients’ narratives. Thus, Brice corresponded with Biezanek, who proclaimed her wholehearted support for the ACT, and stated publicly that she had ‘come to regard cannabis as a medicine’.⁷⁹ Other key physicians whose support Brice cultivated via correspondence included Patrick Wall, an internationally renowned pain specialist and Professor of Physiology at St. Thomas’s Hospital in London, and William Notcutt, a consultant anaesthetist. Both became prominent ACT supporters.⁸⁰ For example, in one televised debate, Notcutt sat beside Brice and substantiated her account with his own experience: ‘there are a group of patients who actually benefit from cannabis. I see them myself [...] there is a place for it.’⁸¹

Summary

Thus, the ACT cultivated and deployed four key patient identities. These acted as ‘symbolic resources’, which enabled the ACT to fashion a narrative legitimising cannabis’s medicinal use. The medical patient identity allowed the ACT to associate cannabis with legitimate modern medicine, aided by the ordinary patient identity, which emphasised the respectability of patients and their cannabis consumption. The suffering patient identity highlighted cannabis’s holistic medicinal importance, and subverted orthodox narratives depicting

⁷⁶ *London Tonight*, 1 March 1993, 03:40.

⁷⁷ WL, SA/ACT/E/7, Elizabeth Brice, fax to Bill Thornton-Smith, 22 October 1993.

⁷⁸ *This Morning*, 17 April 1997, 02:49.

⁷⁹ WL, SA/ACT/E/21, Anne Biezanek to Clare Hodges, 20 October 1994; Morris.

⁸⁰ WL, SA/ACT/E/14, Patrick Wall, fax to Clare Hodges, 9 December 1993; WL, SA/ACT/E/10, Clare Hodges, fax to William Notcutt, 2 October 1993.

⁸¹ WL, SA/ACT/G/17, *The Judy Finnigan Debate*, ITV, 19 June 1994, 01:27:11-01:27:22.

cannabis as recreational or dangerous by showing its value as a humanitarian necessity. Finally, the expert patient identity, constructed through deploying supportive patients' and doctors' voices and favourable contextual information, increased the authority of the ACT's patients' narratives.

Chapter Two: Generating Media Interest

As well as enabling them to construct a narrative legitimising medicinal cannabis consumption, the ACT's cultivation of patient identities facilitated that narrative's dissemination. As Brice noted, the ACT possessed meagre resources and was unable to purchase advertising space or organise demonstrations, relying solely on media interest in its narrative to enable it to present its message to an audience.⁸² This was even true during its April 1997 advertising campaign. Here, the ACT received professional assistance with developing advertising materials, but depended on media interest alone to disseminate them due to lack of budget.⁸³ The following chapter engages with media theory and media history to explain how the ACT's patient identities also served as 'symbolic resources' by generating media attention.

The Medical Patient

As Fowler elucidates, basing his analysis on the widely-accepted scheme of Galtung and Ruge, the media disseminates information deemed to have a high level of 'newsworthiness'.⁸⁴ This is socially constructed, and defined by the possession of certain criteria, one of which is 'unexpectedness'.⁸⁵ The ACT's campaign possessed 'unexpectedness' because its portrayal of cannabis as medically useful to patients contrasted radically with the drug's orthodox depiction as recreational or dangerous.

Another key criterion of 'news value' is 'meaningfulness', which is partly defined according to 'relevance'.⁸⁶ By transforming cannabis into a medical patients' consumer demand, and a question of choice, the ACT exploited the increasing cultural legitimacy and prominence of patient-consumerist discourse surrounding patient choice. The ACT's campaign was 'relevant' because it was familiar – forming part of a wider rise in patient-consumer activism – and it struck a chord with neoliberal themes of consumer choice that dominated healthcare, among other areas of British life.⁸⁷

⁸² WL, SA/ACT/B/6, Clare Hodges to Enquirers, July 1996.

⁸³ Aldhous, interview.

⁸⁴ Roger Fowler, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* (London: Routledge, 1991), 13.

⁸⁵ Fowler, 13.

⁸⁶ Fowler, 14

⁸⁷ Mold, 10.

The Ordinary Patient

The ordinary patient identity further enhanced the ‘meaningfulness’ of the ACT’s accounts through ‘cultural proximity’. By this, Fowler refers to a human tendency to be interested in ‘individuals perceived to be like oneself’.⁸⁸ As Curran and Seaton highlight, the mainstream British press was overwhelmingly conservative in the late 20th Century.⁸⁹ Thus, ACT supporters’ self-depiction as respectable, conventional, ordinary patients augmented their narrative’s media appeal by increasing its ‘cultural proximity’ to the values and interests of the papers and their target audiences. Indeed, as Aldhous emphasised, associating the ACT with ordinariness and respectability was consciously aimed at ‘getting this debate into the middle classes: the *Daily Mail* readers, the *Daily Express* readers’, and ‘disrobing it of [...] hippie, druggie alarm bells that would have alienated that audience’.⁹⁰

More dramatically, the ACT’s patient supporters juxtaposed their respectable, ordinary patient identity against the conventional depiction, and legal status, of cannabis users as criminals. Brice declared that ‘I am a criminal but I [...] am no threat to society’.⁹¹ This contrast bolstered the newsworthiness of the ACT’s narrative by augmenting its ‘unexpectedness’. For example, as Aldhous highlighted, when Brice and Beddow – a housewife and a vicar – appeared together on breakfast television, their respectable, ordinary patient status contrasted dramatically with the ‘visual signage’ that the audience would have expected stereotypical cannabis users to display, relating to ‘the ‘sixties, hippies’, etcetera.’⁹² This ‘dissonance’ generated media appeal because it ‘create[d] confusion’, and ‘that confusion [became] curiosity’.⁹³

The Suffering Patient

The ACT further amplified its narrative’s news value using the suffering patient identity. By filling their accounts with sensational stories of personal human trauma, explicitly framed in

⁸⁸ Fowler, 14.

⁸⁹ James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power without responsibility: press, broadcasting and the internet in Britain*, 7th ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 75.

⁹⁰ Aldhous, interview.

⁹¹ WL, SA/ACT/F/8, Chris Maguire, ‘Pals buy cannabis for my crippling illness’, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 17 Oct 1997.

⁹² Aldhous, interview.

⁹³ Aldhous, interview.

emotive, moral terms, the suffering patient identity transformed the ACT's narratives into archetypical human interest stories.⁹⁴ Fowler highlights that this type of 'personalization', eliciting strong emotions using 'reference[s] to persons', is another key criterion dictating newsworthiness.⁹⁵ Aldhous also stressed the power of emotional content to 'pull someone into a piece of communication.'⁹⁶ Indeed, he confirmed that he and the ACT consciously exploited this in their 1997 advertising campaign, infusing their narratives with 'outrage'.⁹⁷

Moreover, in the 1990s, this human interest angle was particularly appealing to the British press. As Curran and Seaton relate, in the second half of the 20th century, press readerships declined and costs rose due to an increased volume of content and expensive developments in printing technology. Tabloid newspapers, which derived over half their revenue from sales, entered into 'circulation wars', expanding the proportion of content with a 'common denominator appeal', such as human interest stories, to attract readers.⁹⁸ The proportion of human interest coverage in broadsheets also increased, which translated into an even greater increase in absolute terms, due to a rapid expansion in broadsheets' overall page counts after 1985.⁹⁹ Thus, by using the suffering patient identity to construct its narrative as an archetypical human interest story, the ACT exploited a press climate in which this type of item was in especially high demand.

The Expert Patient

Finally, the ACT's cultivation of the expert patient identity ensured that it met the 'threshold' criterion of news value. 'Threshold' represents the 'size' or 'volume' of an event or issue – the greater the scale, the greater its newsworthiness.¹⁰⁰ The ACT's deployment of patients' letters illustrated the scale of both interest in, and usage of, therapeutic cannabis. Deployment of favourable medical opinion demonstrated cannabis therapeutics' broad medico-scientific

⁹⁴ "human interest", *OED Online*, March 2018. <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/89262?redirectedFrom=human+interest>> [accessed 18 April 2018].

⁹⁵ Fowler, 15.

⁹⁶ Aldhous, interview.

⁹⁷ Aldhous, interview.

⁹⁸ Curran and Seaton, 88.

⁹⁹ Shelley McLachlan and Peter Golding, 'Tabloidization in the British Press: A Quantitative Investigation into Changes in British Newspapers, 1992-1997', in C. Sparks and J. Tulloch (eds.), *Tabloid Tales: Global Debates over Media Standards* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 85; Curran and Seaton, 90.

¹⁰⁰ Fowler, 14.

significance – affirmed through citing relevant research and historical context. Thus, in establishing their ‘expert’ status, the ACT highlighted the scale and importance of therapeutic cannabis usage.

Beyond increasing newsworthiness, however, its expert patient status also augmented the ACT’s media appeal by making it an important reference point for journalists. As ACT US co-founder Alice O’Leary-Randall stressed, one of the ACT’s key functions, in America and subsequently Britain, was to act as a ‘platform’ and give ‘people [...] looking for information a place to come to.’¹⁰¹ Thus, journalists who had read about therapeutic cannabis would consult the UK ACT for information and contacts. Indeed, letters from 31 journalists requesting the ACT’s assistance – asking for information (historical, anecdotal or scientific), an interview with a patient, or both – survive.¹⁰² These included national and local journalists from television, radio and the press – ranging from BBC radio and television stations to *The Sunday Times* and *Daily Mail*.¹⁰³

The ACT exploited this reference point status to contribute significantly towards maintaining the media momentum of its narrative, in two ways. Firstly, Brice provided the information and contacts journalists required to create their pieces, simultaneously ensuring that the ACT’s medicalised depiction of cannabis would be strongly represented in their items. Thus, when the *BBC Disability Programmes Unit* asked for assistance, Brice directed them to supporters, such as Vincent and Thornton-Smith, who were guaranteed to give interviews espousing the ACT’s viewpoints.¹⁰⁴ She provided similar help to journalists from *ITV* and *Channel 4*, supplying the latter with so much of their content – ‘press cuttings, research articles, contacts, etc’ – that she felt she had ‘basically produced [their] programme!’¹⁰⁵

Secondly, the ACT’s expert patient reference point status ensured that journalists often referred to them in articles reporting on events relevant to cannabis and its therapeutic effects. Thus, Grimsby MP Austin Mitchell, Brice’s family friend and a key ACT supporter, noted that court

¹⁰¹ Alice O’Leary-Randall, interview by author, 12 February 2018.

¹⁰² Based on a count of correspondence in WL, SA/ACT/E/7, ‘Media’.

¹⁰³ WL, SA/ACT/E/7, Cyril Troy, fax to Clare Hodges, 22 June 1994; WL, SA/ACT/E/7, Julia Drake, fax to Clare Hodges, 6 May 1994; WL, SA/ACT/E/7, Howard Foster, fax to ACT, 15 June 1994; WL, SA/ACT/E/7, Lydia Slater, fax to Clare Hodges, 8 August 1994.

¹⁰⁴ Julia Drake to Clare Hodges.

¹⁰⁵ Brice, *Diary*, December 1994.

cases – in which patients, or their suppliers, were prosecuted for cannabis-related offenses – played an important role in generating ACT media attention.¹⁰⁶ For example, journalists referenced the ACT in relation to the court cases of Biezanek (who herself became an ACT supporter) and Duncan Hughes – who used cannabis to ease tumour-related pain.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, as the issue of therapeutic cannabis gained momentum in the UK, the ACT's views received mention in articles about other significant, related events such as debates in Parliament and a 1997 BMA vote to legalise additional cannabinoids for medicinal use.¹⁰⁸

Summary

Thus, the ACT's deployment of patient identities facilitated the dissemination of its medicalised depiction of cannabis by ensuring that it excelled in meeting certain criteria dictating 'newsworthiness'. The ACT's supporters used the medical and ordinary patient identities to generate 'unexpectedness', by contrasting cannabis's orthodox depiction as recreational and criminal against their respectable, medicinal cannabis usage. ACT supporters made their narrative 'meaningful' by using the medical patient rubric to deploy a patient-consumer rhetoric which was 'relevant' to the contemporary, consumer-driven health policy climate. The ordinary patient identity bolstered this 'meaningfulness' by stressing the 'cultural proximity' of the ACT's supporters to the predominantly conservative mainstream media and its target audiences. Moreover, the suffering patient identity allowed ACT supporters to fashion their narrative as the archetypical human interest story, which was in high demand. The ACT's use of the expert patient identity enabled it to meet the 'threshold' criterion of newsworthiness through emphasising the scale and significance of the issue of therapeutic cannabis use. Furthermore, the expert patient identity enabled the ACT to function as a key journalistic reference point – a position it exploited to facilitate and influence novel media coverage, and gain coverage in articles about relevant developments.

¹⁰⁶ Austin Mitchell, interview by author, 13 March 2018.

¹⁰⁷ WL, 'SA/ACT/F/5, Jonathan Foster, 'Patients tell of relief from pain', *Independent*, 20 October 1993; WL, SA/ACT/F/16, Duncan Campbell, 'Cannabis law 'puts ill in dock'', *Guardian*, 4 March 1996.

¹⁰⁸ WL, SA/ACT/F/7, Michael White, 'Labour tried to stop drug debate', *Guardian*, 8 September 1995; WL, SA/ACT/F/9, Victoria MacDonald, 'Doctors want cannabis-based drugs legalised', *Sunday Telegraph*, 16 November 1997.

Chapter Three: Shifting Portrayals and Perceptions

We have seen how the ACT's supporters used patient identities to construct a medicalised depiction of cannabis and cultivate media interest. This chapter illustrates the success of these tactics in generating coverage for the ACT's views, making its medicalised depiction of cannabis commonplace throughout the British media. The chapter then outlines how this shifted popular perceptions of cannabis, helping to facilitate key developments in cannabis therapeutics.

Portrayals

To explore the ACT's media reach, the author has created a table recording media coverage of the ACT's views detailed in the Wellcome Library's ACT collection.¹⁰⁹ It presents a conservative illustration of the ACT's media presence, as the collection is unlikely to contain or record every item of ACT media coverage. The data nonetheless capture much of the ACT's key media activity, and display six major indications of the ACT's success in disseminating its medicalised portrayal of cannabis throughout the British media.

Firstly, the ACT achieved a significant total volume of coverage. As Figure 2 illustrates, between 1992 and 2000 (inclusive), the ACT or its supporters featured in at least 159 items about cannabis.¹¹⁰ Secondly, in many of these the ACT's views were covered in reasonable depth: 118 items dwelt on the ACT's views for over a paragraph or at least 30 seconds, and often whole items were dedicated to them.¹¹¹

The third indication of the ACT's success in disseminating its narrative was the breadth of coverage it achieved. From 1992 to 2000, only 17% of its coverage derived from dedicated health- or drugs-related publications or television segments.¹¹² Indeed, the ACT received coverage from geographically disparate local radio stations and newspapers: from *BBC Radio Belfast* and *Radio Solent* (Hampshire) to London's *Evening Standard* and *The Orcadian* (Orkney Islands). Nationally, the ACT appeared on *BBC Radio 4*, and *Radio 5 Live*. It also

¹⁰⁹ Appendix, Figure 1.

¹¹⁰ Appendix, Figure 2.

¹¹¹ Appendix, Figure 2; for example, Kelly.

¹¹² Calculated using Appendix, Figure 1, 4th column.

featured on all four main television channels: appearing in five items on BBC 1; one on BBC2; eight on ITV, nationally and regionally; and three on Channel 4. Most impressive – or at least most thoroughly documented – was the ACT’s national press coverage, which spanned liberal and conservative tabloids and broadsheets alike. Regarding the broadsheets, from 1992-2000, the ACT appeared in fifteen articles in the liberal *Independent* and *Independent on Sunday*; eleven in the more conservative *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph*; nine in the *Times* and *Sunday Times*; seven in the *Guardian*; and five in *The Observer*. In the tabloids, the ACT featured in eight items in the *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express*; eight in the *Daily Mail* and *Mail on Sunday*; three in *The Mirror*; and one each in *The Sun* and *News of the World*.¹¹³

The fourth indication of the ACT’s success was the scale on which its views were disseminated. In 1997 alone (the ACT’s most prolific year) and in the mainstream press alone (those national titles listed above) the combined circulation of papers featuring coverage of the ACT or its supporters totalled approximately 12,035,081 copies.¹¹⁴ In 1998, this figure was approximately 9,496,234.¹¹⁵ A sizeable circulation did not guarantee that the ACT’s narrative was read, but significantly increased this likelihood by indicating that many people were reading the paper as a whole.

The fifth indication of the ACT’s success was the impressive consistency of its media coverage. Between Brice’s first radio appearance in July 1992, and March 1999, there were never more than two consecutive months without any media coverage of the ACT’s supporters.¹¹⁶ Moreover, from 1992-7, with a lull in 1996, the number of items in which the ACT featured increased year-on-year, from seven in 1992 to 20 in 1995, peaking at 38 in 1997. The ACT also achieved significant attention in 1998 – 26 items – but coverage tailed off to ten items or below thereafter.¹¹⁷ By this point, endorsements of the development of cannabis therapeutics by the BMA, House of Lords and GW Pharmaceuticals, between July 1997 and November 1998, meant that media coverage depicting cannabis as a legitimate medicine became more

¹¹³ Appendix, Figure 1.

¹¹⁴ All total circulations are calculated using Appendix, Figure 1 and yearly average circulation figures, in this case in *Willing’s Press Guide 1998*, Vol 1 (Teddington: Hollis Dictionaries), 94. Sunday editions of daily papers are included separately in the calculation; repeat appearances in the same paper are excluded.

¹¹⁵ Appendix, Figure 1;

Willing’s Press Guide 1999, Vol 1 (Teddington: Hollis Dictionaries), 95.

¹¹⁶ Appendix, Figure 3.

¹¹⁷ Appendix, Figure 2.

commonplace, with less need for ACT intervention.¹¹⁸ Indeed, by 1998 Brice felt that the bulk of the ACT's work was complete in this regard: therapeutic cannabis was an established 'part of public debate'.¹¹⁹ This, and the progression of Brice's illness, largely explain the decline in ACT media activity.¹²⁰

Finally, the sixth indication of the ACT's success in disseminating its views is the sympathy with which journalists usually discussed them. This was reflected in their article titles, many of which implicitly endorsed the legitimacy of the ACT's medicalised depiction of cannabis. Examples include 'Breaking the law to beat MS', 'Smoking pot to ease the pain' and 'It's illegal – but it's the only thing that stops the pain'.¹²¹ Mitchell highlighted that, in this way, the ACT was 'successful in changing the level of debate [surrounding medicinal cannabis] onto a more sympathetic ground'.¹²²

Indeed, beyond the data referenced above, the ACT's success in transforming the portrayal of cannabis as a medicine into a mainstream, orthodox depiction of the drug was also evidenced by contemporary commentaries on the state of the cannabis debate. As early as December 1994, the *British Medical Journal* noted in a photograph caption above an article about the ACT that '[c]annabis is becoming more respectable'.¹²³ *Druglink*, the UK Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence journal, noted in late 1995 that 'The devil drug [cannabis]' was 'sprouting angel's wings'.¹²⁴ Indeed, in 1998, Heather Ashton, Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychopharmacology at Newcastle University, complained to London's *Evening Standard* that the ACT's views had become so prominent that the drug's negative effects were often neglected. She insisted that: '[t]here is a lot of anecdotal evidence in favour' of therapeutically-used cannabis, but '[w]e don't hear [...] about the people who feel worse.'¹²⁵

¹¹⁸ Suzanne Taylor, 214, 224; Vanessa Thorpe, 'Cannabis: a year that changed minds', *Independent on Sunday*, 27 September 1998.

¹¹⁹ Brice, *Diary*, January 1998; WL, SA/ACT/B/6, Elizabeth Brice, 'General Thoughts', 3 December 1998.

¹²⁰ Mitchell, interview.

¹²¹ Appendix, Figure 1.

¹²² Mitchell, interview.

¹²³ WL, SA/ACT/F/6, Alison Tonks, 'British patients demand to use cannabis', *British Medical Journal*, 10 December 1994.

¹²⁴ 'Cannabis', *Druglink*.

¹²⁵ Gill.

Despite the extensive dissemination of the ACT's views, media depictions of cannabis remained contested. UK cannabis consumption and convictions rose to record levels in the 1990s, reigniting a decades-old debate surrounding cannabis's general decriminalisation.¹²⁶ In this context, cannabis continued to be depicted as dangerous by those warning against general decriminalisation. One *Daily Mail* article, entitled 'The cannabis killer', warned of cannabis's ability to cause socially dangerous psychological pathologies.¹²⁷ Conversely, the longstanding association between cannabis and hippie-inspired pleasure seeking was also perpetuated in the 1990s. In March 1998, the *Independent on Sunday*, which campaigned for cannabis's general decriminalisation in 1997-8, organised a London march for cannabis legalisation reminiscent of the UK's first cannabis legalisation rally, staged by hippies in July 1967.¹²⁸ As the newspaper's report on the march noted: '[t]here was a sense of *déjà-vu*', and 'marchers sang... Bob Marley's "Legalise It"' while '[s]ome smoked'.¹²⁹

The ACT's achievement, then, was not to replace the dominant narratives depicting cannabis as dangerous, or recreational, but to bring its portrayal of cannabis as a legitimate medicine to prominence alongside these in the media, during a crucial period, before and throughout its institutional endorsement by medical and political authorities.

Perceptions

Finally, this essay shall illustrate that, through deploying patient identities to disseminate a medicalised *portrayal* of cannabis in the media, the ACT was instrumental in popularising the *perception* of cannabis as a legitimate medicine. This benefitted both patients, and the field of cannabis therapeutics, despite the ACT's failure to secure cannabis's legalisation for medical purposes.

The first quantitative indication that the ACT was successfully shaping popular perceptions of cannabis came on 4th March 1995, when the *Independent* published a Britain-wide survey of attitudes towards cannabis. 60% felt cannabis should remain illegal. However, 70% believed

¹²⁶ Mills, 7, 191; Suzanne Taylor, 208-9.

¹²⁷ WL, SA/ACT/F/10, David Williams, 'The cannabis killer', *Daily Mail*, 12 November 1998.

¹²⁸ Mills, 189.

¹²⁹ WL, SA/ACT/F/10, Ros Wynne-Jones, 'Pot power', *Independent on Sunday*, 29 March 1998.

physicians should be able to prescribe cannabis.¹³⁰ This followed over two years of ACT campaigning and increasing coverage of its supporters, totalling 41 media appearances by 1995.¹³¹ As the only organisation actively promoting medicalised media portrayals of cannabis, the survey's result suggests that the ACT had succeeded in cultivating the perception that cannabis could act as a legitimate medicine, even among people who believed that its recreational use was too dangerous to be permitted.

Subsequent surveys displayed either a similar, or clearer, popular perception of cannabis's medicinal worth. In a 1997 ICM poll, 71% of people supported the prescription of cannabis.¹³² In an October 1997 MORI telephone poll of 619 British adults, 80% endorsed cannabis's prescription.¹³³ These polls occurred in the context of a year of significant ACT media activity, in which it reached large television audiences and a national press circulation of at least 5,419,743 during its April advertising drive alone.¹³⁴

The most decisive endorsements of the ACT's narrative came in 1998, however. On June 8th, the annual meeting of the Townswomen's Guilds – a national women's organisation that promotes active female citizenship – voted by 1,153 votes to 407 to campaign for cannabis to be made available on prescription. The vote followed a speech by Hodges at the conference which many, including the Guilds' chairwoman, Mrs Hall, found 'particularly convincing'.¹³⁵ Moreover, on 27th July, a BBC1 *Watchdog Healthcheck* programme discussed the legalisation of cannabis for medicinal purposes, and prominent ACT supporter Andrew Coldwell featured, arguing the ACT's case. In a telephone poll following the programme's filmed report, 97% of 42,000 callers supported cannabis's legalisation for medicinal purposes.¹³⁶ 30,000 viewers were so eager to express their opinion that they called within five minutes of the report's conclusion, to its producer's surprise.¹³⁷ Thus, evidence suggests that in the 1990s, a significant

¹³⁰ WL, SA/ACT/F/7, Stephen Ward, 'Cannabis: the drug we still can't accept', *Independent*, 4 May 1995.

¹³¹ Appendix, Figure 2.

¹³² Russell Newcomb, 'The people on drugs: British attitudes to drug laws and policy', *Druglink*, July/August 1999, 15 <<http://www.drugwise.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-people-on-drugs.pdf>> [accessed 27 April 1997].

¹³³ Newcomb, 4.

¹³⁴ Appendix, Figure 1; *Willing's 1998*.

¹³⁵ WL, SA/ACT/F/10, Vanessa Thorpe, 'Legalise it, say Townswomen', *Independent on Sunday*, 21 June 1998.

¹³⁶ WL, SA/ACT/F/10, Vanessa Thorpe, 'Lords hear the medical evidence', *Independent on Sunday*, 2 August 1998.

¹³⁷ Thorpe, 'Lords'.

proportion of the British population came to perceive cannabis as a legitimate medicine for the seriously ill, largely as a result of the ACT's media campaigning.

Other factors undoubtedly shaped individuals' opinions, such as the medical profession's increasing support for cannabis. However, here the ACT also played a significant role. Professor Roger Pertwee, a leading cannabis researcher at Aberdeen University, highlighted at interview that the discovery of cannabinoid receptors in the brain (1988), and peripheral nervous system (1993), was crucial in prompting physicians to take 'another look' at cannabis's medical potential.¹³⁸ However, he also noted that cannabis research remained 'at a very early stage'.¹³⁹ Thus, the transformation of cannabis therapeutics into a major topic of discussion in the medical profession and wider research world 'started with the patients'.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, a *BMA News Review* survey, in which 74.4% of over 150 hospital doctors supported cannabis's availability on prescription, was published following interest stirred by ACT publicity and Biezanek's trial, which it explicitly referenced.¹⁴¹ Similarly, in 1997, the BMA Annual Representatives' Meeting (ARM) resolved that more cannabinoids should be legalised for medicinal use, less than three months after the ACT's April publicity drive.¹⁴² Sefton GP Upendra Pati, who originally tabled the ARM motion, noted that articles in the medical press, and a speech by ACT supporter and Newport MP Paul Flynn in Parliament, were important in convincing him to do this.¹⁴³ Moreover, before the ARM, Brice provided Pati with 'informative material' which he claims was 'very useful in the debate'.¹⁴⁴ As Taylor has noted, through providing anecdotal evidence of cannabis's therapeutic benefits, the ACT also played an important role in guiding the writers of a November BMA report on the *Therapeutic uses of cannabis* to independently endorse the ARM's resolution.¹⁴⁵

The ACT's success in influencing both popular and medical opinions seemed to benefit patients in the 1990s by widely destigmatising therapeutic cannabis usage. The support shown for cannabis's prescription through popular polls in itself indicates that social prejudices

¹³⁸ Roger Pertwee, interview by author, 12 February 2018.

¹³⁹ Pertwee, interview.

¹⁴⁰ Pertwee, interview.

¹⁴¹ WL, SA/ACT/F/6, Colin Meek, 'Doctors want cannabis prescriptions allowed', *BMA News Review*, February 1994; Appendix, Figure 2.

¹⁴² WL, SA/ACT/F/9, 'Meeting supports cannabinoids for medical use', *British Medical Journal*, 315 (1997).

¹⁴³ Upendra Pati, email interview by author, 7-19 February 2018.

¹⁴⁴ Pati, interview.

¹⁴⁵ Suzanne Taylor, 194.

towards medicinal cannabis users were reduced. Indeed, by early 1998, Brice noted in correspondence that, should she have started the campaign in that year, she would not have used a pseudonym, ‘as the issue has become quite respectable’.¹⁴⁶ Mitchell also suggested that greater popular acceptance of medicinal cannabis helped to increase police forces’ leniency towards its usage, reducing the number of medicinal cannabis users taken to court by the turn of the 21st Century.¹⁴⁷

Moreover, through destigmatising medicinal cannabis usage in the media, and securing popular support, the ACT helped to generate a favourable climate in which crucial further developments in cannabis therapeutics could occur. In 1994, when Geoffrey Guy – who founded GW Pharmaceuticals in 1998 – contacted the Home Office, enquiring about conducting clinical trials using cannabis, its response was ‘very frosty’.¹⁴⁸ In 1998, however, the Home Office granted GW Pharmaceuticals a licence allowing them to cultivate cannabis and undertake the UK’s first large-scale clinical trials using cannabis extract.¹⁴⁹ The ACT helped to secure this both by inviting Guy to attend a December 1997 parliamentary delegation where he met Home Office officials, and by helping to foster what Guy described as a ‘national desire’ for therapeutic cannabis, and ‘a level of consensus in the UK that has never before existed on this matter.’¹⁵⁰ Indeed, in December 1999, the Medicines Research Council announced £950,000 of funding for clinical trials involving cannabis.¹⁵¹ GW Pharmaceuticals ran its own large-scale clinical trials, ultimately succeeding in developing the world’s first prescription medicine based on cannabis extract – Sativex – which was licensed in the UK for relieving MS-related spasticity in June 2010.¹⁵²

Despite these significant achievements, the ACT failed to secure the prescription of cannabis itself in Britain. Sativex took several years to develop and its cost – currently not covered by the National Health Service in England and Scotland, with limited coverage in Wales - is far

¹⁴⁶ Brice to Guy.

¹⁴⁷ Mitchell, interview.

¹⁴⁸ WL, SA/ACT/F/10, Luke Harding, ‘People in grass houses won’t get stoned’, *Guardian*, 13 June 1998.

¹⁴⁹ WL, SA/ACT/F/11, Joanna Bale, ‘Sowing seeds for cannabis cure-all’, *The Times*, 23 January 1999.

¹⁵⁰ WL, SA/ACT/B/23, Geoffrey Guy, email to David Hadorn and Ethan Russo, [1998].

¹⁵¹ WL, SA/ACT/F/11, Rachel Ellis, ‘Medical trial take first steps towards legalising cannabis for MS sufferers’, *Express* 14 December 1999.

¹⁵² Home Office, ‘Scheduling of the cannabis-based medicine ‘Sativex’, *Home Office Circular*, 27 March 2013 <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scheduling-of-the-cannabis-based-medicine-sativex>> [accessed 27 April 2018].

greater than that of home-grown cannabis.¹⁵³ Although successful in convincing many politicians and physicians that cannabis had therapeutic value, the BMA, MS Society and British government deemed its ‘whole’ form unacceptable as a medicine, for three primary reasons, beyond the ACT’s control. Firstly, they deemed that there was insufficient large-scale and long-term clinical research ‘scientifically’ demonstrating natural cannabis’s safety and medicinal efficacy.¹⁵⁴ Secondly, many physicians objected to using a drug containing numerous potentially harmful chemicals, and would only accept prescribing specific cannabinoids known to serve specific functions.¹⁵⁵ Finally, as Mitchell noted, governments – Conservative and Labour – continued to perceive recreational and medicinal cannabis usage as inextricably linked issues, and were ‘scared’ to legalise the latter for fear of being criticised for appearing lax on prohibiting the former.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, as Conservative Under-Secretary for Health from 1993-6, John Bowis, recounted at interview, the Conservative government was unwilling to appear to be facilitating drug abuse by making cannabis more readily available, around a time when reports of temazepam abuse widely circulated and the government rescheduled it to make it more difficult to acquire.¹⁵⁷ Thus, operating in what Mitchell deemed an ‘entirely negative’ climate, the ACT’s achievements in shifting perceptions and helping to facilitate developments in cannabis therapeutics appear even more impressive.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Nick Thompson, ‘There is legal marijuana in the UK – so why is it hard to get hold of?’, *Independent*, 26 April 2017 <<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/legal-marijuana-medical-uk-availability-law-a7699056.html>> [accessed 30 April 2018].

¹⁵⁴ WL, SA/ACT/B/8, John Bowis, ‘Cannabis (Therapeutic Use)’, *Hansard: House of Commons debates*, 12 July 1995, column 928.

¹⁵⁵ Gill.

¹⁵⁶ Mitchell, interview.

¹⁵⁷ Bowis, interview.

¹⁵⁸ Mitchell, interview.

Conclusion

Overall, this dissertation has argued that the ACT's supporters deployed four key patient identities as 'symbolic resources' to construct, and widely disseminate, a media narrative depicting cannabis as a legitimate medicine. They thus shifted popular and medical opinions and helped to destigmatise medicinal cannabis usage.

Chapter one outlined how ACT supporters deployed the medical patient identity to present their cannabis usage as legitimately medicinal, reinforced using an ordinary patient identity which distanced them from drug abusers and emphasised their 'respectability'. Moreover, they used the suffering patient identity to construct cannabis as medicinal in holistic, humanitarian terms, and the expert patient identity to enhance their narrative's authority.

Chapter two showed how ACT supporters also deployed these identities to ensure that their narrative excelled in meeting certain criteria which define 'newsworthiness'. They used the medical and ordinary patient identities to cultivate 'unexpectedness', by radically contrasting their cannabis use against cannabis's orthodox depiction. These identities also made their narrative 'meaningful': their consumerist medical patient demands were 'relevant' in the contemporary neoliberal political climate; their ordinary patient 'respectability' made their narrative 'culturally proximate' to the predominantly conservative mainstream media and its target audiences. Moreover, the suffering patient identity framed the ACT's accounts as exemplary human interest stories, which were in high demand. Finally, constructing the expert patient identity involved stressing that the issue of therapeutic cannabis was of a scale and significance worthy of reporting. It also established the ACT as a key journalistic reference point, enabling it to maintain media momentum and shape coverage.

Chapter three demonstrated that the above tactics enabled the ACT to achieve widespread, far-reaching, consistent and largely sympathetic media coverage in the 1990s – particularly in the periods directly preceding, and during, key endorsements of cannabis therapeutics in 1997-8 by the BMA, MS Society and a House of Lords Committee. The ACT was thus instrumental in popularising, among cannabis's still-contested discursive portrayals, a depiction which legitimised its medicinal use. This influenced popular and medical opinions, winning widespread support for cannabis therapeutics. Medicinal cannabis usage was widely

destigmatised, helping to reduce the discursive, and actual, criminalisation of patients, and creating a favourable environment which helped to encourage the UK's first large-scale clinical trials investigating cannabis extract, and the subsequent development of Sativex. The ACT's failure to secure cannabis's legalisation for medicinal purposes, largely due to medical and political cautiousness beyond its control, should not detract from its considerable achievements.

The above exploration of the strategic significance of patient identities in activism offers a fresh angle from which to re-examine other examples of historical patient activism – not least that of the US ACT. It also has fundamental practical implications for current patient activists, highlighting a potent form of 'symbolic resource' which they can cultivate to amplify their agency and achieve substantial change.

Appendix:

Figure 1: Table outlining key details of ACT media coverage contained or described in the Wellcome Library's ACT Collection, 1992-2003

Name of article/ show/ Item	Outlet	Date of Publication/ Broadcast	Is this a dedicated health- or drugs-related outlet or television segment? (Y/N)	Press: did a known supporter of the ACT author this piece? (Y/N)	Over one paragraph/ at least 30 seconds dedicated to a known ACT supporter's propagation of ACT views/ arguments (Y/N)	ACT Supporter/s Mentioned by name
Calendar	Yorkshire Television	1992	N	-	Y	Elizabeth MacRory
The Big Breakfast	Channel 4	1992	N	-	Y	Elizabeth MacRory, Joseph MacRory
From the Weeklies	BBC World Service	31 July 1992	N	-	Y	None
Very Alternative Medicine	The Spectator	1 August 1992	N	Y	Y	Clare Hodges
Drug dealers saved my wife from her MS hell	The Mail on Sunday	15 November 1992	N	N	Y	Elizabeth MacRory, Joseph MacRory
Pot luck denied	The Spectator	21 November 1992	N	Y	Y	Elizabeth MacRory
High, dry and happier	Daily Telegraph	24 November 1992	N	N	Y	Elizabeth MacRory, Joseph MacRory
Minister opens door to legal cannabis use	The Independent	7 February 1993	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Users report relief from symptoms of illness	The Independent	7 February 1993	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Cannabis: why the doctors want it to be legal	The Independent	23 February 1993	N	N	Y	None

I wish I could get it at the chemist's	The Independent	23 February 1993	N	Y	Y	Clare Hodges
Managing disease with cannabis	The Independent	24 February 1993	N	Y	Y	William Thornton-Smith
London Tonight	ITV	1 March 1993	N	-	Y	Elizabeth Brice, William Thornton-Smith
Cannabis 'can help'	Grimsby Evening Telegraph	13 May 1993	N	N	Y	Austin Mitchell
It's the end of the line	Grimsby Evening Telegraph	14 May 1993	N	N	N	Austin Mitchell
Cannabis control	New Scientist	21 August 1993	N	Y	Y	Clare Hodges
Medicine, Man	The Guardian	18 September 1993	N	N	Y	(Anne Biezanek), Clare Hodges, Elizabeth MacRory, Robert Randall
Breaking the law to beat MS	Yorkshire Post	27 September 1993	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges, Elizabeth MacRory, Joseph MacRory
Grassed Up	The Face	October 1993	N	N	Y	Elizabeth MacRory, Robert Randall
Patients tell of relief from pain	The Independent	20 October 1993	N	N	Y	Anne Biezanek, Clare Hodges
Duress of Circumstances	The Spectator	23 October 1993	N	N	Y	Anne Biezanek
Vicar will smoke pot on TV	Daily Express	25 January 1994	N	N	N	Nicholas Beddow
The Big Story	ITV	27 January 1994	N	-	Y	Nicholas Beddow
Doctors want cannabis prescriptions allowed	BMA News Review	February 1994	Y	N	N	Anne Biezanek
Cannabis drug has changed my life	Camberly News	4 February 1994	N	N	N	Anne Biezanek
-	Radio 5 Live	19 February 1994	.	-	Y	Clare Hodges
-	Radio Solent	22 February 1994	.	-	Y	Clare Hodges

-	Radio Belfast	27 February 1994	.	-	Y	Clare Hodges
-	Radio Leeds	7 April 1994	.	-	Y	Clare Hodges
Nurses reject call for cannabis use as painkiller	Daily Telegraph	28 April 1994	N	N	N	Anne Biezanek
When I think it is right to let a patient use cannabis	Daily Express	28 April 1994	N	N	N	Anne Biezanek
Ministers resist calls to go soft on drug laws	The Observer	29 May 1994	N	N	N	Anne Biezanek, William Notcutt
Talkback	The Observer	5 June 1994	N	N	Y	Anne Biezanek, Clare Hodges
Smoking pot to ease the pain	The Sunday Times	12 June 1994	N	N	N	Patrick Wall
The Judy Finnigan Debate	Granada Television	19 June 1994		-	Y	Clare Hodges, Elizabeth Lynn, William Notcutt
Is medicine going to pot?	Daily Mail	9 August 1994	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
The health aid	The Guardian	23 September 1994	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Marijuana refusal thwarts American	The Times	14 October 1994	N	N	N	Robert Randall
Cannabis may be legal for MS patients	The Mail on Sunday	30 October 1994	N	N	Y	Anne Biezanek
British patients demand to use cannabis	British Medical Journal	10 December 1994	Y	N	Y	Clare Hodges, Patrick Wall
Cannabis for cancer patients	Druglink (Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence)	1995	Y	N	N	Clare Hodges
The Healing Herb	ITV	1995	N	N	Y	William Notcutt
Why I had to give my daughter illegal drugs	Realm	1995	N	N	Y	Anne Biezanek
I'd have gone to prison rather than watch my daughter suffer	Woman	1995	N	N	Y	Carol Howard
Use cannabis as a healer says husband	Braintree & Witham Times	1995	N	N	Y	Paul Flynn

The Link	ITV	February 1995	Y	N	Y	Elizabeth Lynn, Geoffrey Vincent
A pain too great for us to endure	Style Magazine, Sunday Times	3 March 1995	N	Y	Y	Carol Howard
Forbidden Medicine (Pulse Special)	Channel 4	4 March 1995	Y	-	Y	William Notcutt
Healthfront	Telegraph Magazine	5 March 1995	N	N	Y	Anne Biezanek, Clare Hodges, Robert Randall, Patrick Wall
The Great Pot Debate	Channel 4	5 March 1995	Y	-	Y	Paul Flynn, Clare Hodges, William Notcutt
Channel 4 viewers vote for legalising cannabis	The Independent	6 March 1995	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
Putting cannabis abuse to good use	Telegraph Magazine	6 March 1995	N	N	N	William Notcutt
Put that in your pipe and smoke it	The Independent	6 March 1995	N	N	N	(maybe take out - doesn't mention ACT or any supporters by name)
Good Morning	BBC 1	8 March 1995	N	-	Y	Clare Hodges
Cannabis helped my daughter	Bournemouth Evening Echo	22 March 1995	N	N	Y	Carol Howard
It's illegal - but it's the only thing that stops the pain	Best	2 May 1995	N	N	Y	Paul Flynn, Carol Howard
It's Your Shout	Carlton TV	1 June 1995	N	-	Y	Clare Hodges

ACTing for change	Nursing Standard	7 June 1995	Y	N	Y	Alan Andrews, Anne Biezanek, Clare Hodges, Elizabeth Lynn, Robert Randall, William Thornton-Smith, Geoffrey Vincent, Patrick Wall, Lord Whaddon
Howard urged to let MS sufferers test cannabis	The Sunday Times	25 June 1995	N	N	Y	William Thornton-Smith, Geoffrey Vincent
Woman's Hour	BBC Radio 4	30 June 1995	N	-	Y	Clare Hodges
Weeding Out Pain	Independent on Sunday	23 July 1995	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges, William Notcutt
Drug-case doctor wants hospitals to grow cannabis	Daily Post	1 August 1995	N	N	Y	Anne Biezanek
Labour tried to stop drug debate	The Guardian	8 September 1995	N	N	N	Paul Flynn
The Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics	The Bush Telegraph	October 1995	Y	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Kilroy	BBC 1	18 December 1995	N	-	Y	Clare Hodges
Don't Prescribe Prescriptions	The House Magazine	19 February 1996	N	Y	Y	Anne Biezanek, Austin Mitchell
Cannabis law 'puts ill in dock'	The Guardian	4 March 1996	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
Is there any hope for dope?	Here's Health	May 1996	Y	N	Y	Clare Hodges
The People's Verdict	ITV	7 August 1996	N	-	Y	Clare Hodges
Speak Out	MS Matters	July/ August 1996	Y	Y	Y	Clare Hodges
Should cannabis be allowed as a prescribed drug?	Daily Mail	10 September 1996	N	N	Y	Anne Biezanek, Clare Hodges, Alan Andrews
Saturday Sermon	Northern Echo	28 September 1996	N	Y	Y	Nicholas Beddow

High hopes for a joint decision	Yorkshire Post	4 November 1996	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
BBC Breakfast News Extra	BBC 1	6 November 1996	N	-	Y	Clare Hodges
Cannabis Survey	Pathways	December 1996	Y	Y	Y	None
A resin to campaign	MS Matters	January/February 1997	Y	Y	Y	Clare Hodges, V. McKee
Marijuana	Men's Health	March 1997	Y	N	N	William Notcutt
Ad campaign to promote cannabis, the medicine	Daily Mail	4 April 1997	N	N	Y	None
Adverts call for medical use of cannabis	Daily Telegraph	4 April 1997	N	N	Y	Chris Aldhous, Sharon Gallacher, Clare Hodges
Advert campaign prescribes cannabis	The Times	4 April 1997	N	N	Y	Sharon Gallacher, Clare Hodges
Cannabis ads set for national debut	Campaign	4 April 1997	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Channel 5 News	Channel 5	4 April 1997	N	-	Y	Nicholas Beddow, Clare Hodges
Doctor backs drive for cannabis therapy	The Scotsman	5 April 1997	N	N	Y	Chris Aldhous, Sharon Gallacher, Clare Hodges
'Sickness and spasms... then cannabis changed my life'	The Independent	5 April 1997	N	N	Y	Chris Aldhous, Clare Hodges
Out of the closet?	Rx magazine, Sunday Telegraph	6 April 1997	Y	N	Y	Clare Hodges, Austin Mitchell, William Notcutt
Joint action	The Guardian	15 April 1997	N	N	Y	None
This Morning	ITV	17 April 1997	N	-	Y	Nicholas Beddow, Clare Hodges
-	London Weekend Television	18 April 1997	.	-	Y	Clare Hodges
A change from cannabis and Marmite sandwiches	Northern Echo	29 April 1997	N	N	N	'the Vicar' (Nicholas Beddow)

-	Disability Now	May 1997	Y	N	N	Clare Hodges
Why we break the law every day	News of the World	June 1997	N	N	Y	Andrew Coldwell
Patients' plea over cannabis	Evening Courier	5 July 1997	N	N	Y	Andrew Coldwell
Cannabis debate is lighting up	Disability Now	August 1997	Y	N	Y	Clare Hodges
This woman is in constant pain. The only drug that can help is illegal	Birmingham Evening Mail	4 August 1997	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
I'm a normal mum but I take cannabis	Woman's Own	25 August 1997	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics (ACT)	Pathways	Autumn 1997	Y	Y	Y	Gordon Prentice
Smoking dope restored my sight	The Observer	14 September 1997	N	Y	Y	Sue Arnold
I smoked cannabis at a party and suddenly I could see again	Evening Standard	18 September 1997	N	N	Y	Sue Arnold
If anything can, cannabis can	The Observer	21 September 1997	N	N	Y	Sue Arnold
Cannabis plea	Evening Courier	October 1997	N	Y	Y	Andrew Coldwell
Cannabis can ease the suffering of patients	Independent on Sunday	5 October 1997	N	Y	Y	Gordon Prentice
-	Bloomberg TV	8 October 1997	.	-	Y	Clare Hodges
We break the law for the sake of our health	The Express	16 October 1997	N	Y (partly)	Y	Andrew Coldwell, Clare Hodges, Austin Mitchell
Pals buy cannabis for my crippling illness	Yorkshire Evening Post	17 October 1997	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
It's Your Shout	Carlton TV	29 October 1997	N	-	Y	Clare Hodges
'Yes' vote for cannabis	Disability Now	November 1997	Y	N	Y	Sue Arnold, Paul Flynn, Clare Hodges
Doctors want cannabis-based drugs legalised	Sunday Telegraph	16 November 1997	N	N	N	None

-	ITN	17 November 1997	.	-	Y	Clare Hodges
From the Edge	BBC 2	24 November 1997	Y	-	Y	Clare Hodges
Granada Upfront	Granada Television	27 November 1997	N	-	Y	Clare Hodges
Marijuana - a missed market opportunity	Scrip Magazine	December 1997	Y	N	Y	Andrew Coldwell
MS sufferer who turned to cannabis escapes jail	Daily Telegraph	3 December 1997	N	N	Y	Elizabeth Ivol
Lighting Up Westminster	Independent on Sunday	14 December 1997	N	N	Y	Austin Mitchell
Look North	BBC 1	January 1998	N	-	Y	Clare Hodges
Think again about cannabis	Yorkshire Evening Post	2 March 1998	N	N	Y	Andrew Coldwell
The Pot v Pain Debate	Evening Standard	24 March 1998	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Judge says drug user has suffered enough	Yorkshire Evening Post	30 April 1998	N	N	N	None
No disability to get sympathy	Disability Now	May 1998	Y	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Disabled dope has no hope	Disability Now	June 1998	Y	N	N	Paul Flynn
Guild supports legal pot	Morning Star	19 June 1998	N	N	N	'a mother of two' (Clare Hodges)
Guild women say make cannabis legal	Daily Mail	19 June 1998	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
Legalise cannabis say Guild women	The Express	19 June 1998	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Townswomen take road to radicalism	The Times	19 June 1998	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
Legalise cannabis say Townswomen	The Mirror	19 June 1998	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
Legalise it, say Townswomen	Independent on Sunday	21 June 1998	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
'Cannabis helps to ease my pain'	Yorkshire Evening Post	26 June 1998	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Marijuana farmer to meet House of Lords	Independent on Sunday	26 July 1998	N	N	N	Andrew Coldwell
BBC Watchdog Healthcheck	BBC 1	27 July 1998	Y	-	Y	Andrew Coldwell
A reason to take cannabis	Disability Now	August 1998	Y	N	N	Clare Hodges

Lords call for cannabis to be legalised as painkiller	The Observer	8 November 1998	N	N	Y	Sue Arnold, Paul Flynn, Gordon Prentice
Is cannabis the wonder drug of the future?	Best	10 November 1998	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Out on a limb over beneficial joints/ Lords back cannabis use for patients	The Guardian	11 November 1998	N	N	Y	William Thornton-Smith, Clare Hodges
Legalise cannabis for sick, say peers	Daily Telegraph	11 November 1998	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
Viewpoint: Clare Hodges	The Express	12 November 1998	N	Y	Y	Clare Hodges
A minority say no to cannabis	The Editor	14 November 1998	N	N	N	Sue Arnold, Clare Hodges
Medical trial takes first steps towards legalising cannabis for MS sufferers	The Express	14 December 1998	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
Ever tried cannabis? prince asks MS sufferer	The Guardian	24 December 1998	N	N	N	Paul Flynn
Ministers approve NHS cannabis tests	Sunday Telegraph	27 December 1998	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
900 in trials to test claim that cannabis has medical benefit	Daily Mail	12 January 1999	N	N	N	Sue Arnold
These women could be the first to take cannabis legally - but should they be allowed?	Daily Mail	19 January 1999	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
MS sufferer hopes for pot luck in drug trials	Yorkshire Evening Post	20 January 1999	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
'One joint changed my life'	The Times	23 January 1999	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Let our disabled have marijuana	The Sun	4 February 1999	N	Y	N	Andrew Coldwell
Lonely protest over cannabis	The Sunday Post	2 March 1999	N	N	Y	Elizabeth Ivol

Now legalise cannabis as medicine, MPs urge	The Express	23 July 1999	N	N	Y	Andrew Coldwell, Paul Flynn, Gordon Prentice
Jury acquits man who grew drug to ease back pain	Daily Telegraph	23 July 1999	N	N	Y	Paul Flynn, Clare Hodges
Cannabis demands	Disability Now	November 1999	Y	N	Y	Clare Hodges
Drug 'relieves spasms'	The Times	14 December 1999	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
Mo may dole out cannabis to sick	Sunday Express	23 January 2000	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
'Yes, I get stoned when I smoke it. But it also improves my eyesight'	The Independent	24 March 2000	N	Y	Y	Sue Arnold
I smoke pot to ease my MS pain	The Mirror	20 April 2000	N	Y	Y	Clare Hodges
Orkney push for cannabis legalisation is praised	The Press and Journal	4 August 2000	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges, Elizabeth Ivol
MS sufferers will tell where to get cannabis	The Orcadian	10 August 2000	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges, Elizabeth Ivol, William Reeve
Persuading the powers that seeking a cure should not make us criminals	Somerville News	Autumn 2000	N	Y	Y	Elizabeth Brice/ Clare Hodges, Austin Mitchell
Docs back cannabis	The Mirror	2 November 2000	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
Doctors' opinions shift on drug legalisation	Morning Star	2 November 2000	N	N	N	Clare Hodges
Cannabis spray eases pain for MS patients	Daily Telegraph	9 December 2000	N	N	Y	William Notcutt
Cannabis tests show relief of long-term pain	The Times	9 December 2000	N	N	Y	William Notcutt
Wheelchair-bound Biz vows to fight on	The Orcadian	16 March 2001	N	N	Y	Elizabeth Ivol

Biz gets busy as demand grows for cannabis chocs	The Orcadian	12 July 2001	N	N	Y	Elizabeth Ivol, William Reeves
Because the Lady loves... Belgian chocolates filled with cannabis	Scotland on Sunday	22 July 2001	N	N	Y	Elizabeth Ivol.
Drug raid won't end cannabis campaign	Daily Express	9 August 2001	N	N	Y	Elizabeth Ivol, William Reeve
Cannabis spray 'relieves pain'	Daily Telegraph	4 September 2001	N	N	N	William Notcutt
Why I broke the law for 10 years to ease my pain	The Herald	4 September 2001	N	N	Y	Clare Hodges
MS man's home raided	The Orcadian	4 October 2001	N	N	N	Elizabeth Ivol, William Reeve, Clare Hodges
Dope doubts	Disability Now	December 2001	Y	N	Y	Clare Hodges
US states lead way on cannabis	Disability Now	December 2001	Y	N	N	Paul Flynn
How the cannabis campaign was won	New Pathways	January/ February 2002	Y	Y	Y	Elizabeth Brice/ Clare Hodges, Austin Mitchell, Patrick Wall
Calendar	Yorkshire Television	19 February 2002	N	N	Y	Elizabeth Brice, Austin Mitchell
MS sufferer too ill to be tried over cannabis	The Times	3 July 2003	N	N	Y	Elizabeth Ivol
Overdose drama as Biz drugs charges dropped	The Orcadian	3 July 2003	N	N	Y	Elizabeth Ivol
Drug in biscuits eases symptoms	Yorkshire Post	7 November 2003	N	N	Y	Elizabeth Brice

NB: This table includes data from press cuttings (Reference: WL, SA/ACT/F) and video recordings of television shows (Reference: WL, SA/ACT/G), supplemented with descriptions of ACT media appearances in the *ACT Diary* (Reference: WL, SA/ACT/D) and descriptions in correspondence with the media (WL, SA/ACT/E/7). All sources of information are fully referenced in the bibliography below.

Items were included in the table if they referenced the ACT, and/or a known ACT supporter endorsing the ACT's medicalised depiction of cannabis. Known ACT supporters were identified as such because their association with the ACT was either mentioned somewhere in media coverage or indicated in private correspondence. Coverage of individuals who supported the ACT's views, and later expressed support for the ACT itself, were included. Coverage of individuals who supported the ACT's views, but for whom no clear evidence exists of any connection to the ACT, has been excluded. Moreover, media coverage for which the only evidence in the ACT collection is ambiguous, and a few press cuttings for which I have been unable to locate any publication dates and outlet details, have been excluded.

The table is organised chronologically, with dates given to the same level of precision as is detailed the ACT collection, or greater where further details could be obtained via internet and online archive searches. Although this dissertation focuses primarily on the 1990s, the table below covers the period 1992-2003, as it was compiled before this essay's scope was narrowed. Thus, it includes all the video recordings and press cuttings in the Wellcome Library featuring ACT coverage. It is hoped that this table shall provide a useful resource for future researchers of the ACT.

Figure 2: Table outlining the volume of ACT media coverage by year

Year	Number of ACT media appearances	Total number of ACT media appearances (cumulative)	Over one paragraph/ at least 30 seconds dedicated to a known ACT supporter's propagation of ACT views/ arguments	Over one paragraph/ at least 30 seconds dedicated to a known ACT supporter's propagation of ACT views/ arguments (cumulative)
1992	7	7	7	7
1993	14	21	13	29
1994	20	41	12	32
1995	25	66	20	52
1996	10	76	8	60
1997	38	114	34	94
1998	25	139	11	105
1999	10	149	6	111
2000	10	159	7	118
2001	9	168	6	124
2002	2	170	2	126
2003	3	173	3	129
Total	173	173	129	129

NB: This table was compiled using the raw data contained in Figure 1. Where radio interviews were referenced only in Brice's diary, it was assumed that the ACT received at least 30 seconds of coverage –the most likely scenario, having been the case with all of the radio and television interviews that survive in full in the ACT collection. Besides this, when the space or time dedicated to ACT coverage in an item was unspecified and unobtainable, the item was excluded from the counts displayed in the 4th and 5th columns above.

Figure 3: Table outlining the volume of ACT media coverage by month

Date	Number of ACT media appearances	Total number of ACT media appearances (cumulative)
July 1992	1	1
August 1992	1	2
September 1992	0	2
October 1992	0	2
November 1992	3	5
December 1992	0	5
January 1993	0	5
February 1993	5	10
March 1993	1	11
April 1993	0	11
May 1993	2	13
June 1993	0	13
July 1993	0	13
August 1993	1	14
September 1993	2	16
October 1993	3	19
November 1993	0	19
December 1993	0	19
January 1994	2	21
February 1994	6	27
March 1994	0	27
April 1994	3	30
May 1994	1	31
June 1994	3	34
July 1994	0	34

August 1994	1	35
September 1994	1	35
October 1994	2	37
November 1994	0	37
December 1994	1	38
January 1995	0	38
February 1995	1	39
March 1995	9	48
April 1995	0	48
May 1995	1	49
June 1995	4	53
July 1995	1	54
August 1995	1	55
September 1995	1	56
October 1995	1	57
November 1995	0	57
December 1995	1	58
January 1996	0	58
February 1996	1	59
March 1996	1	60
April 1996	0	60
May 1996	1	61
June 1996	0	61
July 1996	1	62
August 1996	1	63
September 1996	2	65
October 1996	0	65
November 1996	2	67
December 1996	1	68
January 1997	1	69
February 1997	0	69
March 1997	1	70
April 1997	12	82

May 1997	1	83
June 1997	1	83
July 1997	1	85
August 1997	3	88
September 1997	4	92
October 1997	6	98
November 1997	5	103
December 1997	3	106
January 1998	1	107
February 1998	0	106
March 1998	2	109
April 1998	1	110
May 1998	1	111
June 1998	8	119
July 1998	2	121
August 1998	1	122
September 1998	0	122
October 1998	0	122
November 1998	6	128
December 1998	3	131
January 1999	4	135
February 1999	1	136
March 1999	1	137
April 1999	0	137
May 1999	0	137
June 1999	0	137
July 1999	2	139
August 1999	0	139
September 1999	0	139
October 1999	0	139
November 1999	1	140
December 1999	1	141
January 2000	1	142

February 2000	0	142
March 2000	1	143
April 2000	1	144
May 2000	0	144
June 2000	0	144
July 2000	0	144
August 2000	2	146
September 2000	1	147
October 2000	0	147
November 2000	2	149
December 2000	2	151
January 2001	0	151
February 2001	0	151
March 2001	1	152
April 2001	0	152
May 2001	0	152
June 2001	0	152
July 2001	2	154
August 2001	1	155
September 2001	2	157
October 2001	1	158
November 2001	0	158
December 2001	2	160
January 2002	1	161
February 2002	1	162
March 2002	0	162
April 2002	0	162
May 2002	0	162
June 2002	0	162
July 2002	0	162
August 2002	0	162
September 2002	0	162
October 2002	0	162

November 2002	0	162
December 2002	0	162
January 2003	0	162
February 2003	0	162
March 2003	0	162
April 2003	0	162
May 2003	0	162
June 2003	0	162
July 2003	2	164
August 2003	0	164
September 2003	0	164
October 2003	0	164
November 2003	1	165
December 2003	0	165
Total	165	165

NB: This table was compiled using the raw data contained in Figure 1. Where the month in which an item was broadcasted or published was unspecified and unobtainable via internet and online archive searches, the item was excluded from the counts displayed above. For this reason, the Figure 3 total is lower than that of Figure 2.

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