

UW-Madison: Study looking at non-prescription CBD products sold in SW Wisconsin finds labeling largely inaccurate

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CBD products are booming in popularity, but many of the products on the market don't actually contain what they claim, according to new research from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

UW-Madison School of Pharmacy researchers, including doctor of pharmacy student, Owen Miller, pharmacy professor Barry Gidal, and Ed Elder, director of the Zeeh Pharmaceutical Experiment Station, published a study about the topic in [Epilepsy and Behavior](#). The study used HPLC, or high-performance liquid chromatography, to analyze the contents of 39 CBD-infused beverages being sold across Southwest Wisconsin, including products like CBD-infused beverages, oils and other miscellaneous items, including chocolate bars, honey, coconut oil, transdermal patches, and more. Although not all products specified CBD levels on their labels, just six — 15.4 percent — were accurately labeled.

Beverages were the least likely to be accurately labeled. Among 21 beverages — like coffee, seltzer, kombucha, water, tea, and even beer — only one was accurately labeled. Seventy-eight percent were over-labeled, meaning they contained less than 90 percent of the CBD they were supposed to contain. And 7 percent were under-labeled, with 110 percent or more CBD than the label indicated.

“Cannabinoids are lipid-soluble and don't really dissolve in water,” says Professor Barry Gidal. “When I started seeing CBD beverages, I realized that there was probably nothing in them, but the products are still being sold at a premium.”

Then, there are the potential dangers. Many of these products contained detectable levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which can cause the psychological effects attributed to marijuana. THC was detected in 24 percent of beverages, 55 percent of oils, and 71 percent of miscellaneous products. The inaccuracy of labeling, particularly regarding THC, could cause unexpected effects on the central nervous system and cause trouble for those who are subject to drug testing.

Read our full, in-house story [here](#).

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