ABSTRACT

Problems with adverse events and addiction from pharmaceutical opiates like oxycodone has skyrocketed. Many doctors have endorsed integrative models that incorporate herbal medicines like kratom, but U.S. regulatory policies limit information and access to these natural substances. To broaden integrative potentials, research on the comparative safety and effectiveness of kratom and oxycodone was assessed along with the holistic health aspects influenced by the consumption of either drug. Engel’s biopsychosocial model and ecopsychological theories informed these research questions and the online questionnaire created by the investigator. It included the Effectiveness and Safety (ES) scale, the Holistic Health Aspects (HHA) scale, the Drug remedy scale, and a qualitative inquiry to assess the best integrative techniques for medicine. Results from the ES scale items and qualitative inquiry found that both drugs relieve pain, improve mood/sociability, and enhance motivation/energy. Oxycodone users experienced these improvements initially, but problems with tolerance, addiction, withdrawal, and negative side effects developed over time. Kratom users experienced significantly less of these problems. They also emphasized how kratom relieved opiate cravings/withdrawal symptoms and how it was a good substitute for prescription opiates, alcohol, and harsher drugs. The ES scale ANCOVA found that kratom is perceived to be a more safe and effectiveness pain reliever than oxycodone. Results from HHA scale ANCOVA found that oxycodone users experience more problems with their biopsychosocial health while kratom users experience more improvements to their biopsychosocial health. Kratom is perceived to be a better remedy than oxycodone. Results suggest that kratom is valuable for integrative medicine.