



Gulf in CBD product quality laid bare as calls for tighter controls amplify



TTS Pharma's CEO Mark Tucker details the CBD regulatory landscape in a roundtable meeting in London.

By Will Chu

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A cannabidiol (CBD) manufacturer is calling for

greater regulatory controls after independent analyses of 31 CBD-based products found varying levels of active ingredients as well as CBD-related labelling issues.

Tests found products inaccurately labelled with psychoactive compounds cannabitol (CBN) and/or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) found in almost half of the samples with some above the one milligram (mg) legal limit.

“All three of our independent analyses demonstrate an urgent need for greater regulatory control of currently available CBD products to safeguard consumers,” says Mark Tucker, CEO of TTS Pharma, which carried out the tests.

“The implications of such a rapidly growing market cannot be ignored. Without detailed analysis of CBD products, by manufacturers and suppliers, consumers cannot be sure whether the product is safe to consume.”

Further findings revealed ten samples contained THC were above the legal limit with nine of the thirteen samples contained CBN. Four of the nine samples containing CBN exceeded this legal limit.

Less than half (13) were within 10% of the stated level of CBD while four samples contained less than 50% of the level stated with five exceeding the level stated.

“This study represents the vast majority of brands, and spans the leading high-street retailers including what we believe to be the top four selling products currently available,” Tucker adds.

“Given that these highly popular products on the UK market were tested and shown to contain a number of potentially dangerous contaminants, it is likely that a large number of people in the UK have ingested those illegal and/or dangerous substances.

Government urged to step up

TTS Pharma’s findings *“should be on the radar of regulators and Government”*, according to the CEO of the London-based firm, which supplies cannabinoid products for the food, cosmetics and nutraceutical markets.

“We hope that this research is enough to accelerate a full scale assessment using independent and accredited laboratories,” says Tucker.

“The EU infrastructure is comparatively sound and well defined when compared to the North American regulatory environment.

“It is therefore important that products imported into the EU from the US (as well as other ex-EU countries) are competing on a level playing field and meeting all EU regulatory requirements.

“For example, we have seen products imported from the USA which would be legally compliant if they could demonstrate provenance to an EU approved seed but do not suggesting that their source material does not comply with EU regulations.

“We have also seen US sourced products which claim to be THC-free but also clearly contain CBN and other contaminants. This lack of compliance needs to be recognised and enforced for consumers seeking a safe food supplement.”

TTS Pharma currently makes available pharmaceutical grade CBD Isolate, for cosmetics in Europe and the UK with the firm currently compiling a Novel Food Dossier to make CBD available for a variety of food supplement applications.

“With the appropriate pre-market authorisation, we will deliver CBD products that surpass the quality of products that we can see (and have proven) unfit to be on the market,” says Tucker.

“We are members of the Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA) and are keen to help raise awareness of the importance of quality and provenance of all consumer products containing CBD, with a view to safeguarding consumers and helping to clean up what is undoubtedly an unrestrained market.”

CBD and athletes

One such area of interest on TTS Pharma's radar is sports nutrition, where CBD use amongst athletes is gaining momentum with links to decreasing inflammation and aiding in sleep and recovery.

However, with athletes wary of using CBD due to the differences in product quality, the fear of failing drug tests is all too real and for Tucker the sports nutrition arena can thrive under tighter CBD regulation.

"The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has removed CBD from its list of prohibited ingredients," he explains.

"However, we have observed products pitched towards recreational athletes that still contain traces of controlled drugs.

"This raises obvious issues for elite and professional athletes as they cannot afford to risk failing drugs tests due to contaminated products.

"Full confidence in the supply chain is therefore essential, with validated analytical methods employed and independently verified by accredited organisations.

"Any athlete participating in sport and looking to enhance their performance through nutrition, should do so by seeking professional advice. Scientific research is very much underway, but we are yet to draw specific conclusions

"For any athlete consuming CBD products, they should do their homework and check where the product originated (certificate of origin), where it was manufactured and whether a certificate of analysis is available, before they trust the label.

*“For any professional or elite athlete we would recommend only using products that have been verified and approved by **Informed Sport** or an equivalent body.”*

Current regulatory landscape

Current UK laws governing CBD use remain complex and subject to change. According to the Government’s Home Office department, CBD is not a controlled substance as long as it does not contain any level of cannabinoids such as THC or CBN.

Pure CBD is difficult to isolate from CBN/THC and should the controlled substance remain in the product, manufacturers are in breach of the law.

Further afield, some cannabinoids, including CBD, are officially classed as Novel Foods in the EU and should only be sold within the EU following pre-marketing authorisation.

CBD-based products such as topicals (tinctures, drops, syrups, oils) chewables (gum drops) and chocolate are classified as novel foods.

Novel foods authorisation would require the products to have a low/negligible level of THC so that Misuse of Drugs legislation in the UK does not apply.

Any health and nutritional claims for an individual food product must align with Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006.

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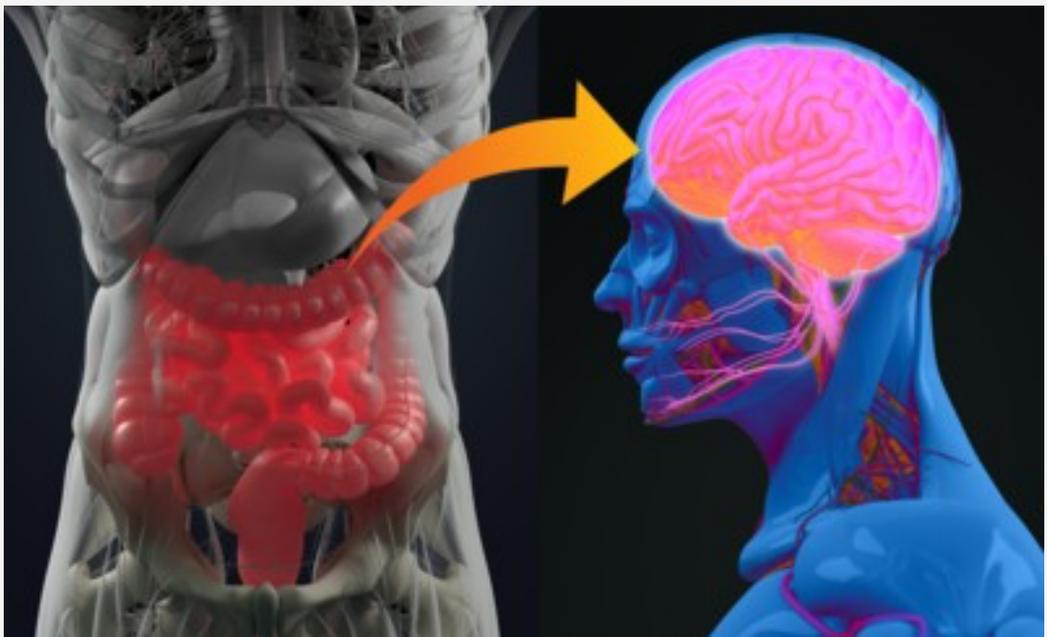
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