

New research suggests a compound in marijuana can help manage symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

Parkinson's disease is a chronic, degenerative disorder that mostly affects the elderly population. Like Alzheimer's it is thought to be caused by a progressive loss of neurons in the brain.

Interesting enough, compounds in marijuana have shown promise in treating a number of neurodegenerative disorders.

In a new study, published Sept. 18 in the Journal of Pharmacology daily treatment with cannabidiol (CBD) led to improved wellbeing and quality of life scores among a small group of Parkinson's disease patients.

Conducted by a team of researchers from Brazil, CBD was administered in gelatin capsules over a 6-week period. The study involved 21 patients, who were given either 75 mg/day, 300 mg/day or placebo.

Cannabidiol is a non-psychoactive compound that is produced naturally by the cannabis plant. Due to its anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties, many believe CBD holds potential as a treatment for conditions like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

"Our findings point to a possible effect of CBD in improving quality of life measures in Parkinson's disease patients," the authors wrote.

Patients that received 300mg doses showed the most significant improvements. On the other hand, a disease-modifying effect was not found.

But the authors suggest that the small size of the patient group may have limited their findings. According to the team, prior studies have shown a wide range of benefits of marijuana for Parkinson's disease, including relief from motor symptoms and sleep disturbances.

"Recently, another study revealed significant improvement in specific motor symptoms after treatment with Cannabis. In addition, CBD's possible anxiolytic, antidepressant, antipsychotic and sedative properties could explain the reports of improvements in emotional well-being, daily life activities and, hence, quality of life," they summarized.

And that's not all. Though scientists haven't figured out exactly how it works, animal studies suggest compounds in marijuana may be able to slow the progression Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative conditions as well.

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