

Synthetic cannabis chemical reduces pain

July 12 2006

Texas researchers say a synthetic version of the chemical that gives marijuana smokers their high can also act as a pain reliever.

Scientists at the University of Texas Health Science Center found that certain synthetic cannabinoid chemicals can block a heat-related nerve channel in the body, making it a potential new pain reliever for surgical incisions and chronic inflammation disorders such as arthritis, the San Antonio Express reported.

The study will appear this week on the online site of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science.

Lead author Kenneth M. Hargreaves, chairman of endodontics in the university's dental school, said that by altering the cannabinoid and using it in tiny doses, scientists appear to be able to avoid the neurological effects of marijuana, the newspaper reported.

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