

Study confirms that cannabis is beneficial for multiple sclerosis

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Cannabis can reduce spasticity in multiple sclerosis (MS) patients. A systematic review, published in the open access journal *BMC Neurology*, found that five out six randomized controlled trials reported a reduction in spasticity and an improvement in mobility.

Shaheen Lakhan and Marie Rowland from the Global Neuroscience Initiative Foundation, Los Angeles, USA, searched for trials evaluating the cannabis extracts delta9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). According to Lakhan, "We found evidence that combined THC and CBD extracts may provide therapeutic benefit for MS spasticity symptoms".

Spasticity, involuntary muscle tension or contraction, is a common symptom of MS. Many existing therapies for this symptom are ineffective, difficult to obtain, or associated with intolerable side effects. In this study, reported incidence of side effects from cannabis, such as [intoxication](#), varied greatly depending on the amount of cannabis needed to effectively limit spasticity, but the researchers note that side effects were also seen in the [placebo](#) groups. They add, "Considering the distress and limitations spasticity brings to individuals with MS, it is important to carefully weigh the potential for [side effects](#) with the potential for symptom relief".

Lakhan concludes, "The therapeutic potential of cannabinoids in MS is comprehensive and should be given considerable attention".

More information: Whole plant [cannabis](#) extracts in the treatment of spasticity in multiple sclerosis: a systematic review, Shaheen E Lakhani and Marie Rowland, BMC Neurology (in press), www.biomedcentral.com/bmcneurol/

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