

Does cannabis use affect empathy?

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In a study [published](#) in the *Journal of Neuroscience Research*, psychological assessments indicated that people who regularly use cannabis, or marijuana, tend to have a greater understanding of the emotions of others.

Brain imaging tests also revealed that [cannabis users'](#) anterior cingulate—a region generally affected by cannabis use and related to empathy—had stronger connectivity with [brain regions](#) related to sensing the emotional states of others within one's own body.

The study included 85 regular cannabis users and 51 non-consumers who completed psychometric tests and a subset of 46 users and 34 nonusers who underwent functional magnetic resonance imaging exams.

"Although further research is needed, these results open an exciting new window for exploring the potential effects of cannabis in aiding treatments for conditions involving deficits in social interactions, such as sociopathy, [social anxiety](#), and avoidant personality disorder, among others," said co-author Víctor Olalde-Mathieu, Ph.D., of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

More information: Empathy related differences in the anterior cingulate functional connectivity of regular cannabis users when compared to controls, *Journal of Neuroscience Research* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/jnr.25252](#). onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jnr.25252

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