

Do Cannabis and Cannabinoids Have a Psychopharmacologically Therapeutic Effect?

I. Pajevic¹, M. Hasanovic¹, L. Avdic¹

¹Department of Psychiatry, University Clinical Center Tuzla, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introduction

Written historical evidence reveals that Cannabis sativa has been used medically, recreationally and spiritually for more than five centuries in many cultures. To this day it is considered the most-used plant-based psychoactive substance with millions of different usages across the world.

Objectives

To review what the empirical and clinical studies, conducted over the past two decades, indicate about effects of the consumption of prepared cannabis on physical and mental health as well as the impact on social functioning.

Results

Generally, research supports cannabis' clear acute effect on neurocognition, while non-acute effects for prolonged use of marijuana are unclear and still insufficiently explored. Due to CBD (cannabidiol's) safety and tolerability, the absence of psychoactive or cognitive effects, the existence of clinical trials with positive results and its broad pharmacological spectrum, CBD (cannabidiol) is a cannabinoid whose initial results will likely lead to implementation into clinical practice. The fact that the results of previous studies establish the claim of CBD (cannabidiol) as an antipsychotic and anxiolytic, makes the above developments even more likely. However, long-term, double-blind, placebo studies with samples of patients with different psychotic and anxiety disorders are still necessary. Likewise, due to CBD's biphasic effects, determining an adequate therapeutic dose remains a challenge to conclude, the cannabinoid system represents a promising target for new therapeutic interventions in psychiatry.

Conclusion

However, further controlled studies are essential to determine the precise mechanisms of action of cannabinoids on various neuropsychiatric disorders as well as the safety of their use are needed.