

# Marijuana is a help for Alzheimer's Disease

Scientists find that THC and related compounds in cannabis can help to treat patients of Alzheimer's disease.



A field of legal cannabis plants near Meaux, France.

(Photo : Sean Gallup/Getty Images)

Marijuana plants can help to treat the brain-damaging effects of Alzheimer's disease, say Salk Institute scientists. Experts find that tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and related compounds in cannabis can stoke the cellular removal of the toxic amyloid beta that is closely linked to the illness.

"Although other studies have offered evidence that cannabinoids might be neuroprotective against the symptoms of Alzheimer's, we believe our study is the first to demonstrate that cannabinoids affect both inflammation and amyloid beta accumulation in nerve cells," [says](#) Salk Professor David Schubert, a senior author of the paper on the new research.

Even though the probe is in an incipient phase, it may help to understand the role of inflammation in Alzheimer's disease. It might indicate that new therapeutics can be developed to treat the illness.

Alzheimer's is a worrying disease that can take a patient to severe memory loss and affect his ability for everyday tasks. Amyloid beta is linked to cellular inflammation as well as neuron death.

"Inflammation within the brain is a major component of the damage associated with Alzheimer's disease, but it has always been assumed that this response was coming from immune-like cells in the brain, not the nerve cells themselves," says Antonio Currais, a postdoctoral researcher in Schubert's laboratory and first author of the paper. "When we were able to identify the molecular basis of the inflammatory response to amyloid beta, it became clear that THC-like compounds that the nerve cells make themselves may be involved in protecting the cells from dying."

Neurons were developed in the laboratory for preliminary studies. Cannabis compounds such as THC brought down the amyloid beta protein levels and also wiped out the inflammatory response from nerve cells due to the protein. It enabled the nerve cells to live through it.

"When we were able to identify the molecular basis of the inflammatory response to amyloid beta, it became clear that THC-like compounds that the nerve cells make themselves may be involved in protecting the cells from dying," said another author, Antonio Currais in a [statement](#).

The study was published in [Aging and Mechanisms of Disease](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuJPrjEAzeE>



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