HEALTHY TIPS

Cannabis may Better Memory in Alzheimer's by Removing Alzheimer Proteins from the Brain

By bestfolkmedicine · 21/07/2019 · 2 min read



According to a team from scientists at the Sal Institute, their preliminary data from research showed that THC and other cannabis compounds can improve the cellular elimination of amyloid betas, Alzheimer proteins.

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Though the studies were done in lab-grown neurons, they offer great insight into the effect of inflammation in Alzheimer's and may provide the necessary clues to create new therapy for this disease.

Is Cannabis the Key to Memory Improvement in Alzheimer's?

According to the scientists, although there have been other studies as well pointing out the use of cannabinoids in Alzheimer's, they believe their study is the first which shows that cannabinoids influence inflammation and the levels of amyloid beta in nerve cells.

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Alzheimer's is a progressive brain disease which causes loss of memory and can worsen one's quality of life and their ability to go on with daily tasks. Unfortunately, it affects more than 5 million people in America, according to NIH and it's a leading reason for death.

This is also the most common reason for dementia. To make things worse, the numbers are expected to triple in the next fifty years.

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What's the Role of Amyloid Beta in Alzheimer's?

For a long period of time, it's been known that this protein accumulates in the nerve cells of the brain before Alzheimer's symptoms and plaques develop. This is the main component of these deposits which are the disease's hallmark. However, the exact role of this protein and the plaques which it creates remains unknown.

According to a manuscript from 2016 from the Aging and Mechanisms of Disease, high levels of amyloid beta were linked with cellular level inflammation and increase in neuron death. The exposure of the cells to THC successfully lowered these levels, as well as the inflammatory response from the nerve cells and thus, the nerve cells could survive.

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Inflammation & Alzheimer's

Inflammation in the brain is a major contributor to Alzheimer's; however, it's always been thought that this is a response from the immune-like brain cells, not the nerve cells.

When the scientists identified the molecular level of the inflammatory response to this protein, it was clear that THC-like compounds produced by the nerve cells may participate in the prevention of cell death.

Namely, our brain cells have switches known as receptors and they can be activated with endocannabinoids which are lipid molecules produced by the body. They're used for intercellular brain signaling.

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THC, a molecule from marijuana which has psychoactive effects, is able to activate the same receptors. Exercise was also found to increase the endocannabinoid production in the body and according to some studies; it may slow down the progression of the illness.

The scientists emphasize that the use of THC-like compounds as potential therapy needs to be further tested in clinical trials.

Sources:

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