

Treatment of ADHD with cannabinoids: Abstract of the 25th European Congress of Psychiatry

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Overview

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Abstract

Introduction: Adults with ADHD describe self-medicating with cannabis, with some reporting a preference for cannabis over ADHD medications.

Objectives: The experimental medicine in ADHD-cannabinoids study was a pilot randomised placebo-controlled experimental study of a cannabinoid medication, Sativex oromucosal spray, in 30 adults with ADHD. **Methods** The primary outcome was cognitive performance and activity level using QbTest. Secondary outcomes included ADHD and emotional lability (EL) symptoms.

Results: Thirty participants were randomly assigned to the active (n = 15) or placebo (n = 15) group. For the primary outcome, no significant difference was found in the ITT analysis although the overall pattern of scores was such that the active group usually had scores that were better than the placebo group (Est = -0.17, 95%CI-0.40 to 0.07, P = 0.16, n = 15/11 active/placebo). For secondary outcomes, Sativex was associated with non-significant improvements in hyperactivity/impulsivity (P = 0.03), a cognitive measure of inhibition (P = 0.05), inattention (P = 0.10) and emotional lability. Per-protocol effects were higher.

Conclusion: Results did not meet significance following adjustment for multiple testing. One serious (muscular seizures/spasms) and three mild adverse events occurred in the active group and one serious (cardiovascular problems) adverse event in the placebo group. Adults with ADHD may represent a subgroup of individuals who experience a reduction of symptoms and no cognitive impairments following cannabinoid use. This provides some preliminary evidence in support of the self-medication theory of cannabis use in ADHD. A larger trial is warranted.

By the same authors

Effects of stimulants and atomoxetine on emotional lability in adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Moukhtarian, T. R., Cooper, R. E., Vassos, E., Moran, P. & Asherson, P. Jul 2017 In : European Psychiatry. 44, p. 198-207

Article

Cannabinoids in attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: A randomised-controlled trial

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Article

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From the same journal

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Article

Response to the commentary by Buoli et al., EURPSY-D-18-00265

Fusar-Poli, P. 29 Aug 2018 (Accepted/In press) In : European Psychiatry.

Letter