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Cannabis and cannabinoids for the treatment of mental disorders and symptoms: A systematic review and meta-analysis

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Use of Medicinal Cannabis/Cannabinoids

Use of cannabis for therapeutical purposes is increasing, with mental health being one of the most common reasons behind non-cancer pain

Methods

- Series of systematic reviews
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - ADHD
 - Tourette's syndrome
 - PTSD
 - Psychosis
- Total of 83 studies identified (40 of which are RCTs)

Findings

- No significant differences within any depression, ADHD and Tourette's syndrome outcomes
- Only a small number of outcomes found an effect of cannabis/cannabinoids, mostly THC



Findings

	Comparison	Pooled SMD
Anxiety		
Change in anxiety symptoms	THC vs. Active	-0.12 (-0.30, 0.05)
	THC vs. Placebo	-0.25 (-0.49, -0.01)
PTSD		
Change in global functioning	THC vs. Placebo	-1.13 (-1.48, -0.77)
Change in nightmare frequency	THC vs. Placebo	-1.11 (-1.46, -0.76)
Psychosis		
Change in negative symptoms	THC vs. Placebo	0.36 (0.10, 0.62)
Change in cognitive function	THC vs. Placebo	1.08 (0.71, 1.45)
Change in global functioning	CBD vs. Placebo	-0.62 (-1.14, -0.09)

Findings

- Compared to placebo, cannabinoids have:
 - Increased adverse events
 - Increased number of withdrawals
 - Increased number of withdrawals due to adverse events



Conclusion

- Overall, there is a lack of evidence indicating a beneficial effect of cannabinoids on mental health disorders and symptoms
- Though 40 RCTs were identified, only 1 study had depression as primary outcome and 4 studies had anxiety as primary outcome
 - No study had depression and only 3 had anxiety as the primary condition
- More research on the effectiveness of cannabinoids is needed, especially for depression and anxiety