

CBD for ADHD/ADD: What Does the Science Say?

The truth is coming out!



As is the case with most medical cannabis-related topics you hear about nowadays, there is certainly no shortage of anecdotal evidence circulating around in regard to the positive effects of CBD oil for ADHD/ADD.

You may have heard about Joy Neely, for instance, a businesswoman in Kansas who was galvanized to start

doing research on the non-psychoactive cannabinoid after her 15-year old ADHD nephew came to live with her. She was so blown away by the therapeutic effects of the compound that she decided to start her very own CBD-based company, Haniel Concepts.

Charles Rodkey, an ex-Marine who served in Iraq, is another current businessman who was prompted to launch himself into the legal cannabis industry after using CBD for his own ADHD: “I take it personally for social anxiety and ADHD,” he says, “...if I had this when I was in school, it would have helped me a lot, just with focus. It’s huge for focus.”

But like most similar stories you hear about in the news or online regarding the positive effects of cannabis – or CBD in particular – these are simply anecdotal accounts; people telling their personal stories with no clear scientific or clinical basis.

What we need, rather (in order for CBD to garner the real attention that it so much deserves), is some solid, research-based evidence.

In this article, we take a look at some of the most recent scientific publications regarding CBD for ADHD and ADD. Does it work? Is it a viable alternative treatment option? Can it safely be used on children?

CBD Oil for ADHD/ADD: What Evidence is There?

To be clear, there have not yet been any large scale clinical trials carried out on the effects of CBD for ADHD. Like we said, the majority of positive “human” evidence exists mostly anecdotally, while the majority of actual research-based evidence has been carried out on animal models and/or cultured lab cells in a controlled environment.

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In any regard, let's take a look at some of the most relevant scientific publications to date regarding CBD and Attention Deficit Disorder.

- **2008 case report on cannabis for ADHD observes positive result in 28year old patient**

In this individual case study, a team of German researchers from the Heidelberg University Medical Centre tested the effects of cannabis on a 28-year old male patient with a history of criminal drug violations and “numerous violations of traffic laws” (later attributed in part to a medical diagnosis of ADHD).

After administering high-potency THC (please note that this study did not test the effects of CBD specifically), it was noted that the test subject not only “benefited from the cannabis treatment,” but that it appeared to “regulate activation to a level which [was] considered optimum for performance ... having a positive impact on performance, behaviour and mental state.”

Moreover, it was even noted that the cannabis use led to “enhanced driving related performances” – clear indication that cannabis can potentially have positive effects on sufferers of ADHD.

- **2012 study in the *Journal of Psychopharmacology* notes that CBD inhibits hyperactivity and “normalizes social investigative behaviour”**

This study was conducted on lab rats that were treated with a proprietary-formulated substance that induces onset symptoms of ADHD (including hyperactivity, reduced attention span, and “reduced social investigative behaviour”).

After being treated with a 3mg per kg dose of CBD, it was observed that hyperactivity in the rats was inhibited, and social investigated behaviour was not only “normalised” but was “increased beyond control levels.”

There were, however, no perceived effects on attention span.

- **2016 study concludes that only 2% of ADHD patients believe cannabis has “no effect” on the disorder**

This was a unique study published in 2016 that actually used online discussion forums to gauge the prevalence and effectiveness of cannabis use among real-life ADHD patients.

After reviewing 268 separate forum threads on the topic, 55 specific threads ended up being used for the study, with a total of 401 posts being taken into consideration. Of the 401 posts, it was observed that 25% of them indicated cannabis to be “therapeutic for ADHD.” Moreover, just 2% of first-hand users said that marijuana had no effect whatsoever on ADHD.

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- **2017 publication observes the effects of Sativex (a cannabis-based drug) for ADHD patients**

This study monitored the effects of Sativex (a synthetic, FDA-approved cannabis based medication with a 1:1 THC to CBD ratio) on patients with diagnosed ADHD. It selected 30 individuals, of which 15 were administered the cannabis drug and the other 15 were administered placebo.

Among the group that was given Sativex, it was observed that there were “nominal” improvements in inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. This led the researchers to conclude that “adults with ADHD may ... experience a reduction of symptoms and no cognitive impairments following cannabinoid use. [The] study provides preliminary evidence supporting the self-medication theory of cannabis use in ADHD.”

However, it should be noted that over 13% of the subjects given Sativex experienced adverse side effects, a problem which is common among patients who take the synthetic, pharmaceutical marijuana drug (the vast majority of medical cannabis users say that “natural” herb is far safer and more effective).

Additional Thoughts on CBD for ADHD/ADD

Overall, these four studies represent the core of research that has been carried out and published in regard to CBD for ADHD. However, Dr. David Bearman, one of the most “clinically knowledgeable physicians in the U.S. in the field of medicinal marijuana,” has recently been investigating the effects of cannabinoids on ADHD and he says the potential therapeutic value is tangible, to say the least.

In a statement published on Leafly, Dr. Bearman claims that “cannabis appears to treat ADD and ADHD by increasing the availability of dopamine, [which] has the same effect but is a different mechanism of action [than] stimulants like Ritalin.”

In a nutshell, Dr. Bearman has determined that at least a partial cause of ADHD/ADD is a deficiency in the neurotransmitter dopamine, of which the administration of CBD has been shown to increase production of.

Thus, it is speculated that the consistent, therapeutic administration of products like **quality CBD oil** may be able to “correct the dopamine deficiency observed in ADD/ADHD patients, if dosed appropriately and administered safely ... [allowing] boring and arduous tasks [to] become more manageable, and mood swings to level out.”

This is nothing more than speculation, to be sure, but the potential and the general intrigue among the medical and scientific community is promising, to say the least.

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CBD for ADD/ADHD: Is it Safe for Kids?

Lastly, we want to touch briefly on a question that is extremely common among parents of children with ADHD: is CBD safe for kids?

Before we provide any response to this, we want to make it inherently clear that we **are** not physicians, and thus none of the information (unless cited by medical references) in this document (or on our Facebook Page) should be taken as clinical advice. That being said, all we can do in regard to answering the question of whether or not CBD is safe for kids, is reference statements from reliable sources.

First, it was recently declared in a global investigative report by the World Health Organization that CBD is “generally well tolerated, with a good safety profile,” and that its use poses no “public health-related problems.”

Moreover, organizations like the renowned Netherlands Hemp Dispensary have made out-and-out claims that cannabinoids (such as CBD) “can do no harm to a child.”

This is of course supplementary to the myriad of high-profile news articles that have covered stories of young children – even infants – taking non-psychoactive CBD to treat serious medical conditions such as Dravet’s Syndrome and chronic seizures.

And finally, in a 2016 publication titled the “Effectiveness of Cannabidiol Oil for Paediatric Anxiety and Insomnia,” it was determined that cannabidiol oil (CBD oil) was a “safe treatment for reducing anxiety and improving sleep in a young [10-year old] girl with posttraumatic stress disorder.”

Final Thoughts on CBD for ADHD/ADD

Again, we want to make it inherently clear that there have been no large-scale clinical trials carried out on the effects of CBD for ADHD, ADD, or any other deficit disorders. As such, we cannot make any outward claims that products like CBD oil can act as an effective therapy or treatment for the condition.

However, taking into consideration the above-mentioned studies and the wealth of overwhelmingly positive anecdotal evidence, it appears that there is a correlation between the non-intoxicating cannabis compound and the chemical/neurological pathways that are responsible for producing ADHD symptoms.

While doctors and researchers still have a long way to go in terms of figuring out why exactly this is the case, it may very well come to light in coming years that CBD oil for ADHD is indeed a **safe, reliable, and effective treatment option** for patients of all ages.

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