

Marijuana and mental health: It's not 'strictly helpful or harmful'

The exciting news about the complexity of cannabis is that it holds much promise as a potential medicine for many ailments. The worrisome news is that there is a gap between the hype and the evidence-based research.

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The reality is that cannabis cannot be pigeonholed as strictly helpful or harmful. Instead, meaningful discussion about its potential benefits and harms requires careful and nuanced consideration of the scientific literature, coupled with a humble attitude. As delineated in a recent and thorough review paper in the International Review of Psychiatry, the relationship between cannabis and mental health is especially complicated.

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For example, two of the best-known cannabinoids found in the cannabis plant are delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). In general, [THC has been shown to produce anxiety and psychotic features](#), especially at higher doses, whereas CBD has been shown to produce [anxiolytic](#) and [antipsychotic](#) effects.

However, many other variables affect whether a person will experience increased or decreased anxiety or psychotic symptoms when ingesting cannabis, including: potency levels; the presence of other cannabis-related chemicals; the amounts used; and the person's frequency of use, prior experience with the substance and ability to titrate the dose, and their likelihood to experience psychiatric symptoms.

Mixed messages about cannabis have become more common over time. This is not surprising given the complexity of the cannabis plant and the complexity of conducting cannabis-related research.

Read full, original post: [Is Cannabis Good or Bad for Mental Health?](#)