

Marijuana Could Reduce Brain Damage After Stroke, Researchers Say

New research suggests compounds in marijuana may protect the brain from damage following a stroke. Scientists hope to perform human trials in the near future.

Researchers at the University of Nottingham conducted a meta-analysis of previous studies, reports the Nottingham Post, concluding that cannabinoids could reduce the severity of stroke as well as improve neurological outcomes.

Lead author Dr. Tim England, honorary consultant stroke physician at the University of Nottingham and Royal Derby Hospital, presented the findings at this week's annual UK Stroke Forum conference.

Dr. England explained in an [university release](#) that while research thus far has been limited to animals, the latest findings provide support for human studies.

“This meta-analysis of pre-clinical stroke studies provides valuable information on the existing, and importantly, missing data on the use of cannabinoids as a potential treatment for stroke patients. The data are guiding the next steps in experimental stroke in order to be able to progress onto initial safety assessments in a clinical trial.”

Dr. England and his team examined 94 past studies involving the effects of various cannabinoids on 1022 rats, mice or monkeys, reports The New Zealand Herald. The effects on stroke seemed to be consistent across all three types of cannabinoids: synthetic, marijuana-derived and those naturally produced by the body.

Dr. Dale Webb, director of research and information at the Stroke Association, also concluded that scientists should now aim to replicate the findings in humans.

“The findings have identified the potential for cannabinoids to reduce brain damage caused by stroke. Further research is needed to investigate whether cannabinoids have the same effects in humans: the effects of cannabis on the brain are highly complex and it remains a risky substance.”

Following the presentation of the findings, Dr. Madina Kara, a neuroscientist at the Stroke Association, said that human trials are now “under discussion.”

<http://www.leafscience.com/2013/12/03/marijuana-reduce-brain-damage-stroke-researchers-say/>