Cannabis could be the key to treating people with PTSD

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Cannabis continues to surge forward as governments deem it fit for recreational or medicinal use. We are now in an era with improved understanding of what the plant is and how it can promote the well-being of people suffering from different causes.

Chemical compounds in the plant called cannabinoids have shown versatile therapeutic effects by stimulating the body’s endocannabinoid system. The main cannabinoids are CBD and THC, with both known for their medicinal benefits while only THC possesses psychoactive effects. Cannabis’s medicinal efficacy can be maximized by incorporating the various cannabinoids, terpenes, and flavonoids that are naturally found in cannabis plants like indica and sativa.

This improved understanding has helped cannabis become more well endorsed as a source of treatment and relief from conditions like anxiety, insomnia, and pain. It has also shown effectiveness in helping people suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

**Understanding the symptoms**

PTSD can develop following a traumatic event such as being in
combat or experiencing a life threatening moment like a natural
disaster or assault. This leads to lingering memories and difficulty
sleeping as well as functioning normally while at work or in school.
Not only that, but an individual may experience major emotional
change and perception of the world, and these symptoms can make it
just about impossible to maintain a standard quality of life.

Typically, those who suffer from the various symptoms for more than
several months are at risk of developing PTSD. Psychotherapy and
medication are available to help PTSD patients suffering from
emotional instability and possibly substance abuse, and cannabis has
emerged as another way to help them cope, not to mention providing
a safer alternative to prescription medication that can have serious
side effects.

**Reduced levels of cannabinoids**

CBD and THC are capable of helping treat people suffering from PTSD
by improving the endocannabinoid system’s mediation of essential
functions including memory consolidation and retrieval. By activating
CB1 and CB2 receptors located throughout this core system,
cannabinoids could prompt the system to produce neurotransmitters
that helps promote happiness, pleasure, and memory.

These cannabinoids play a critical role in assisting PTSD cases by
preventing the retrieval of the underlying trauma, effectively
preventing traumatic memories and nightmares, while also helping
attain emotional wellbeing. This has made it a popular treatment for
PTSD patients, of which many are combat veterans.

A study conducted by NYU Langone Medical Center researchers showed that people suffering from PTSD have much lower levels of a neurotransmitter called anandamide than others. Anandamide is one of the body’s primary endocannabinoids, meaning natural cannabinoids produced by the body. These operate in a similar way to cannabis by stimulating the endocannabinoid system, which is responsible for core functions such as mood, happiness, fear, and anxiety.

Essentially, anandamides operate as a natural antidepressant and can also impair memory as well. CB1 cannabinoid receptors in the body help turn off traumatic memories so that people can essentially stop paying attention to them. Lack of endocannabinoids such as anandamides can also serve to induce symptoms of PTSD such as anxiety and fear.

Lead author Dr. Alexander Neumeister stated, “There’s a consensus among clinicians that existing pharmaceutical treatments such as antidepressant simply do not work. In fact, we know very well that people with PTSD who use marijuana — a potent cannabinoid — often experience more relief from their symptoms than they do from antidepressants and other psychiatric medications. Clearly, there’s a very urgent need to develop novel evidence-based treatments for PTSD.”
Controlling the after effects

Cannabis can also serve to minimize or prevent nightmares that frequently occur in those suffering from PTSD. Not only that, but PTSD triggers intense stress that places a person in a constant state of awareness and tension, making it very difficult to get any sleep.

By reducing REM sleep and the vivid dreams that occur during this stage, this can allow cannabis to relieve any recurring nightmares that are associated with PTSD.

In fact, a study was conducted to test this hypothesis by utilizing a cannabinoid receptor stimulant called nabilone. This involved 47
patients who despite using antidepressants and seeing a psychiatrist regularly, continued to have recurring nightmares. Following treatment, 72% of patients stopped having nightmares or had their severity drastically reduced.

Not only that, but many patients also stated that the quality and duration of sleep improved, while daytime flashbacks and sweating at night also decreased. The study showed that cannabinoids could serve a much more effective role than many prescription medicines and antidepressants that were proving to be futile in comparison.

While THC and CBD can both help people suffering from PTSD, CBD tends to be more accessible as well as having the benefit of being non-psychoactive. Cannabis regulations have certainly improved, but it still remains out of the reach of many who could use it to provide relief for their PTSD symptoms.

CBD tends to be seen in a more positive light than THC, allowing it to be accessed through major distributors like PotNetwork Holdings, Inc. (OTCMKTS:POTN). They provide safe and non-toxic CBD alternatives to ineffective and addictive prescription medications like opioids to help improve the quality of life for those suffering from PTSD.

POTN manufactures and distributes CBD infused products such as edibles for simple consumption, tinctures for additional convenience and effective dosing, and vaping for those who enjoy smoking cannabis oil for relief and relaxation. Creams are also available to enhance pain relief utilizing the anti-inflammatory properties that
CBD possesses.

PTSD is a serious disease that many people in the world suffer from, drastically reducing the quality of life as its varying symptoms such as nightmares, difficulty in functioning socially, and emotional imbalance can cripple people like war veterans and others who have experienced a major trauma.

Cannabinoids like CBD can help empower the body’s endocannabinoid system and promote quality sleep, prevent traumatic memories from arising, as well as establish physical and emotional wellbeing to mitigate these devastating symptoms of PTSD and allowing patients to regain hold of their lives.