

Hemp for the Protection of COVID-19?

Researchers at Oregon State University have created a technique through chemical screening that shows the ability of hemp compounds to help prevent the virus that causes COVID-19 from entering human cells.

Richard van Breeman, a researcher with OSU's "Global Hemp Innovation Center", College of Pharmacy, and Linus Pauling Institute helped lead a study that used a pair of cannabinoid acids to bind with the SARS-COV-2 spike protein, blocking a critical step in the process the virus uses to infect people. The compounds are cannabigerolic acid, (CBGA) and cannabidiolic acid (CBDA). The spike protein is the same drug target used in COVID-19 vaccines and antibody therapy.

These cannabinoid acids are abundant in hemp and many hemp extracts. Van Breeman stated, "These are no controlled substances like THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, and have a good safety profile in humans. His research showed the hemp compounds were equally effective against variants of SARS-CoV-2, including variant B.117 and B.1.351, which were first detected in the United Kingdom and South Africa, respectively. These two variants were also known as the alpha and beta variants, respectively.

Van Breeman states that these acids from hemp could be used to help prevent SARS-CoV-2 infection and also to shorten infections by preventing virus particles from infecting human cells.

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