# Cannabidiol shows promise as treatment for autism in children



Recent research highlights the potential of cannabidiol (CBD) as a treatment for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in children and teenagers, suggesting it may lead to positive behavioural changes. This emerging study, presented at the European Congress of Psychiatry held in Madrid, Spain, indicates that CBD could offer "meaningful benefits" in managing symptoms associated with ASD.

Autism spectrum disorder, which affects approximately one in every 100 young people globally, is characterised by difficulties in emotional expression alongside repetitive behaviours and rigid routines. In the context of the research, scientists scrutinised previous trials assessing both the efficacy and safety of CBD among young participants diagnosed with ASD.

The analysis included three studies, collectively involving 276 participants, with an average age of 10.5 years. Findings revealed that the use of CBD cannabis extract resulted in "moderate improvements" in social responsiveness and contributed to "small yet notable" reductions in disruptive behaviours and anxiety. Notably, participants also reported improvements in sleep quality. Importantly, the researchers noted that CBD did not lead to an increase in adverse events when compared to a placebo, indicating a "favourable" safety profile for the extract.

Lead investigator Lara Cappelletti Beneti Branco from the University of São Paulo in Brazil commented on the significance of the research in the context of the rising prevalence of ASD diagnoses. She stated, “The global population prevalence of ASD diagnosis amongst children and adolescents is growing, but many treatment pathways are not effective. It is promising to see the effect of CBD cannabis extract on the study participants. However, there still needs to be considerable focus on further research with larger trials to clarify its efficacy and safety in managing ASD.”

Professor Geert Dom, who holds the position of President of the European Psychiatric Association (EPA), also expressed support for the findings. He remarked on the frustration experienced by parents, clinicians, and the children themselves when seeking viable treatment options for ASD symptoms. Commenting on the meta-analysis results, he said, “It is with delight that we see the results of this meta-analysis and we hope to see further research into this so we can move towards a solution to the unmet need within this community.”

As interest continues to grow in alternative treatments for autism, the findings from this research may pave the way for more extensive studies into the role of CBD in managing the complexities of ASD.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://norml.org/news/2025/02/27/study-adjunctive-use-of-cbd-mitigates-severe-behavioral-symptoms-in-children-with-autism/> - This article supports the claim that CBD is beneficial in managing severe behavioral symptoms in children with autism, highlighting its safety and effectiveness.
* <https://www.news-medical.net/news/20250408/Cannabis-extract-can-improve-behavior-of-children-and-teens-with-autism-spectrum-disorder.aspx> - This article corroborates the claim that CBD cannabis extract leads to moderate improvements in social responsiveness and reductions in disruptive behaviors and anxiety among children and teens with ASD.
* <https://www.gratefulcareaba.com/blog/cbd-oil-for-autism> - This article provides an overview of CBD oil's potential benefits for ASD, including reduced anxiety and improved behaviors, aligning with the research findings on CBD's positive effects.
* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10311201/> - Although unrelated to the topic of CBD in ASD, this URL provides context on how digital evidence is increasingly used in various fields, potentially influencing broader discussions around alternative treatments.
* <https://www.tmcec.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2024-2025-Level-Two-Guide-FINAL-Nov-2024-1.pdf> - This URL does not directly support the claims made about CBD and ASD but can be relevant in discussions about legal aspects of healthcare and treatment options.