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Cannabis and Cannabis Extracts: Greater Than the Sum of Their Parts?

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SUMMARY. A central tenet underlying the use of botanical remedies is that herbs contain many active ingredients. Primary active ingredients may be enhanced by secondary compounds, which act in beneficial synergy. Other herbal constituents may mitigate the side effects of dominant active ingredients. We reviewed the literature concerning medical cannabis and its primary active ingredient, Δ^9 -tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Good evidence shows that secondary compounds in cannabis may enhance the beneficial effects of THC. Other cannabinoid and non-cannabinoid compounds in herbal cannabis or its extracts may reduce THC-induced anxiety, cholinergic deficits, and immunosuppression. Cannabis terpenoids and flavonoids may also increase cerebral blood flow, enhance cortical activity, kill respiratory pathogens, and provide anti-inflammatory activity.

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