

Staff Reporter

Researchers in Canada say they are considering Cannabis as a potentially valuable tool to fight against COVID-19.

Researchers Olga and Igor Kovalchuck have reportedly been developing and testing a novel cannabis strain for years, except with the goal of creating a strain that helps to combat cancer and inflammation,

When the pandemic hit, the duo started to focus their efforts on how the strain might be used to help fight COVID-19.

The duo's work was published in an April issue of the online medical journal Preprints, according to a Forbes report.

The study says similar to other respiratory pathogens, SARS-CoV2 is transmitted through respiratory droplets, with potential for aerosol and contact spread. It uses receptor-mediated entry into the human host via angiotensin-converting enzyme II (ACE2) that is expressed in lung tissue, as well as oral and nasal mucosa, kidney, testes, and the gastrointestinal tract.

"Modulation of ACE2 levels in these gateway tissues may prove a plausible strategy for decreasing disease susceptibility," reads the study.

After looking at the research on cannabis and COVID by other scientists, they were able to determine that cannabis, a special strain in particular, could potentially block COVID-19 from entering a person's body to begin with.

It is also possible that the strain could be used to prevent the virus from being able to propagate once it's already entered someone's system.

"Cannabis sativa, especially one high in the anti-inflammatory cannabinoid cannabidiol (CBD), has been proposed to modulate gene expression and inflammation and harbor anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory properties," the study said.

"Working under the Health Canada research license, we have developed over 800 new Cannabis sativa lines and extracts and hypothesized that high-CBD C. sativa extracts may be used to modulate ACE2 expression in COVID-19 target tissues."

Right now it's still a theory rather than a confirmed fact; however, it offers some hope for the future. If they're able to prove the idea, the next step would be to manufacture the successful strain into medical formations that could be used for prevention and treatment by the medical field, they said.

The couple also pointed out that not every strain of cannabis is going to impact you in the same way. While it's possible that they will be able to find a strain that can help prevent or treat COVID-19, there are also strains that could potentially make it worse.

While our most effective extracts require further large-scale validation, our study is crucial for the future analysis of the effects of medical cannabis on COVID-19. The extracts of our most successful and novel high CBD C. sativa lines, pending further investigation, may become a useful and safe addition to the treatment of COVID-19 as an adjunct therapy," the study says.

"They can be used to develop easy-to-use preventative treatments in the form of mouthwash and throat gargle products for both clinical and at-home use. Such products ought to be tested for their potential to decrease viral entry via the oral mucosa. Given the current dire and rapidly evolving epidemiological situation, every possible therapeutic opportunity and avenue must be considered."

