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Abstract

Objectives: To review the evidence relating to the effect of cannabis on exercise performance.

Design: A systematic review of published literature

Method: Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the principal psychoactive component of cannabis.

A search was conducted using PUB med, Medline and Embase searching for cannabis, marihuana, cannabinoids and THC, in sport and exercise; the contents of sports medicine journals for the last 10 years; as well as cross references from journals and a personal collection of reprints. Only English language literature was reviewed and only articles that specified the details of a formal exercise program or protocol. Individuals in rehabilitation or health screening programs involving exercise were included as the study may have identified adverse reactions in the marihuana group. Review articles, opinion pieces, policy statements by sporting bodies and regulatory agencies were excluded.

Results: Only 15 published studies have investigated the effects of THC in association with exercise protocols. Of these studies, none showed any improvement in aerobic performance. Exercise induced asthma was shown to be inhibited. In terms of detrimental effects, two studies found that marihuana precipitated angina at a lower work-load (100% of subjects) and strength is probably reduced. Some subjects could not complete an exercise protocol because adverse reactions caused by cannabis. An

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