



THC + CBD and Appetite in Older Adults: A Negative Clinical Result

Cannabis is often associated with increased appetite, but does that translate into a clinically useful effect in older adults with poor appetite?

A 2025 triple-blind randomized crossover trial studied 17 adults aged 65 years or older with poor appetite. On the active study day, participants received two doses of an oromucosal cannabis-based medicine, each containing 8.1 mg THC and 7.5 mg CBD.

Caloric intake was only about 10 kcal higher with the cannabinoid medicine than with placebo — a difference that was not statistically significant. Possibly related adverse events were mild and transient, with no serious related adverse events.

Potential application

The study challenges one of the most familiar assumptions about THC-containing cannabis: appetite stimulation observed in some settings does not necessarily translate into increased caloric intake in every population. Older adults, dosing schedules and clinical causes of poor appetite may require very different approaches.

Reference

Nielsen RL, Bornæs O, Christensen LWS, et al. The appetite stimulating effect and safety of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD) in older patients with poor appetite: a triple-blinded, randomized, placebo-controlled, cross-over trial. *Clinical Nutrition*. 2025;47:248–257.

Dr. Peter Verdegem, Ph.D., MBA

