



Cannabis makes pain more bearable rather than actually reducing it, a study from the University of Oxford suggests. Using brain imaging, researchers found that the psychoactive ingredient in cannabis reduced activity in a part of the brain linked to emotional aspects of pain.

But the effect on the pain experienced varied greatly, they said. The researchers' findings are published in the journal *Pain*. The Oxford researchers recruited 12 healthy men to take part in their small study.

Participants were given either a 15mg tablet of THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) - the ingredient that is responsible for the high - or a placebo.

The volunteers then had a cream rubbed into the skin of one leg to induce pain, which was either a dummy cream or a cream that contained chilli - which caused a burning and painful sensation.

Each participant had four MRI scans which revealed how their brain activity changed when their perception of the pain reduced.

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