



Industrial *Cannabis sativa* (Hemp or fiber type): Cannabidiol (CBD) Prevents Heart Failure-An Updated Review

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GSC Biological and Pharmaceutical Sciences, 2025, 33(03), 396-406

Publication history: Received on 31 October 2025; revised on 16 November 2025; accepted on 20 December 2025

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/gscbps.2025.33.3.0482>

Abstract

Cannabis sativa L., commonly known as hemp, has been cultivated and utilized medically throughout the world. Humans and other mammals contain an Endocannabinoid system (ECS) within their bodies, which plays a significant role in maintaining homeostasis, or balance, in the body. Together with the CB1 and CB2 receptors, constitute the ECS, a complex and highly conserved neuromodulator network involved in regulating a wide array of physiological processes. Cannabidiol (CBD) and other phytocannabinoids are gaining attention for their therapeutic potential in cardiovascular disease (CVD), the world's leading cause of death. Heart failure (HF) is characterized by energy deprivation, calcium (Ca²⁺) handling alterations, and inflammation: effects associated with mitochondrial dysfunction. One of the recent studies by García-Rivas et al., (2025) demonstrated that cannabidiol (CBD) offers cardio protection in a heart failure mouse model induced by L-NAME and ANGII administration. CB2 has emerged as a modulator of cardiovascular health, exerting potent anti-inflammatory and the protective effects while avoiding the psychotropic activity associated with CB1 activation. However, cannabinoids have not yet reached clinical maturity for broad implementation in cardiovascular therapeutics. One of the most pressing issues is the translational gap between experimental findings and clinical application.

Keywords: *Cannabis Sativa*; Cardiovascular Disease (CVD); Cannabidiol (CBD); Endocannabinoid System (ECS); Hemp; Heart Failure

1. Introduction

Cannabis sativa has been used for thousands of years for recreational, medicinal, or religious purposes. *Cannabis sativa* is a flowering plant from the *Cannabaceae* family and genus *Cannabis* [1-47-56]. Many historians believed that Indian Himalayan Region was the centre of origin of *Cannabis sativa* L. and *Cannabis indica* L. [1-50-56]. *Cannabis sativa* is a plant notorious for its psychoactive effect, but when used correctly, it provides a plethora of medicinal benefits [1-47-56]. *Cannabis sativa* is also a wild noxious weed with notorious psychoactive principle, Δ^9 -tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) found growing in India, China, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Morocco [1-45-56]. Cannabis has a long history in India, recorded in legends and religion. It was found in various habitats ranging from sea level to the temperate and alpine foothills of the Indian Himalaya Region from where it was probably spread over the last 10,000 years [1-25]. However, due to the presence of psychoactive molecules, Δ^9 -tetrahydrocannabinol (Δ^9 -THC) and Δ^8 -tetrahydrocannabinol (Δ^8 -THC), *Cannabis sativa* cultivation and its use is restricted/regulated in many countries [1-56]. Across diverse cultures, from India, China and Egypt to the Islamic regions, *Cannabis sativa* was used for pain management, antiemetic, anticonvulsant, and anti-inflammatory purposes [1-2-50].

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Introduced into Western medicine by William O'Shaughnessy in 1838 to treat a variety of conditions, including rheumatic pain and epilepsy, the use of cannabinoids (CBs) in clinical practice entered a period of latency and oblivion due to political barriers and problems in establishing quality control [1-56]. Cannabis was (re) introduced into British medical practice in the early 1840's by Irish physician Dr. William O'Shaughnessy, an army surgeon serving in Calcutta, India [1-40-56]. *Cannabis sativa* extracts were typically administered orally in the form of an alcoholic tincture and were commonly incorporated in proprietary medicines [1-45-56]. In the Victorian period, cannabis was widely used for a variety of ailments, including muscle spasms, menstrual cramps, rheumatism, the convulsions of tetanus, rabies, and epilepsy, and as a sedative [1-56].

Cannabis sativa L., is classified into two types as Industrial *Cannabis sativa*, hemp or fibre type and Medical *Cannabis sativa* L. (drug or marijuana) based on its THC content [1-55]. Medical *Cannabis sativa* (drug or marijuana) contains a very high levels of THC (above 0.3 to 38% of dry weight) [1-40-50]. On the other hand, Industrial *Cannabis sativa* L. (Hemp) contains very low levels of THC (0 to 0.3% of dry weight) [1-45]. Industrial *Cannabis sativa* (hemp), as a diverse plant, can be a revolutionary crop for a better future and for upcoming generations [1-48-54]. It is an eco-friendly and worthwhile crop that complements a sustainable growth system. Industrial hemp farming has the potential to dramatically minimize the amount of carbon impact on the environment and can be cultivated with a little or no usage of chemical pesticides or fertilizers [1-49]. The stalks, seeds, and leaves are converted into various construction materials, textiles, paper, food, furniture, cosmetics, and healthcare products [1-48-53]. Biochar, bioplastics, biofuels, and biopesticides are some of the innovative applications of the hemp plant, which are subjects of research and debate at present time [1-55]

Industrial *Cannabis sativa* (Hemp of fiber type) has been cultivated for millennia as a source of fiber, food, medicine and utilization of hemp for essential oils [1-48-54]. In addition to fiber and essential oils, the hemp plant produces hundreds of secondary metabolites including flavonoids, diterpenes, triterpenes, and cannabinoids [1-48-55]. Unlike primary metabolites such as proteins, nucleic acids, lipids, and carbohydrates that are essential for life, secondary metabolites benefit plants in other ways such as deterring predators, attracting pollinators, or preventing infection [1-48-56].

2. The Endocannabinoid system (ECS)

The Endocannabinoid system (ECS) (Figure-1) represented a critical part of understanding Δ^9 -tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), cannabidiol (CBD) and its potent effects on the human body [1-57-58]. Humans and other mammals contain an Endocannabinoid system (ECS) within their bodies, which plays a significant role in maintaining homeostasis, or balance, in the body [1-48-58]. This unique Endocannabinoid system (ECS) also influences regulatory processes as diverse as appetite, sleep, mood, stress, energy levels, and reproduction [3-48-58]. The Endocannabinoid system (ECS) produces endogenous cannabinoids (produced internally) and responds to exogenous cannabinoids (produced externally), like the ones found in *Cannabis sativa* which are called phytocannabinoids [1-3-48-58]. Endogenous cannabinoids are now generally referred to as and, together with cannabinoid receptors, constitute the 'Endocannabinoid system' [3-48-58-65]. Evidence has also emerged that tissue concentrations of endocannabinoids, cannabinoid receptor density and/or cannabinoid receptor coupling efficiency increased in a range of disorders [3-48-58]. In some of these disorders, for example, multiple sclerosis, certain types of pain, cancer, schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorders, some intestinal and cardiovascular diseases, excitotoxicity and traumatic head injury, this upregulation of the Endocannabinoid system may cause a reduction in the disease [3-48-58]. However, there are other disorders, for example, impaired fertility in women, obesity, cerebral injury in stroke, endotoxemia shock, cystitis, ileitis and paralytic illness in which the unwanted effects appear to result from an upregulation of the endocannabinoid system, suggesting that this system has its own pathology and severity of symptoms or a slowing of disease progression possibly also that it sometimes mediates unwanted effects because it is being influenced by pathological events taking place in some other system from which it receives input [57-58-117]. The Endocannabinoid system (ECS) has been recently recognized as an important modulatory system in the function of brain, endocrine, and immune tissues [4-57-58-117]. ECS appears to play a very important regulatory role in the secretion of hormones related to reproductive functions and response to stress [3-57-58-117]. Some of the healthy and natural ways to boost endocannabinoid system: Increase the intake of Omega-3 Fatty Acids, exercise regularly, manage stress better, Lower alcohol consumption and increase the consumption of phytocannabinoids [1-57-58-117]. There are two main types of cannabinoid receptors in the body: CB1 and CB2 [2-57-58-117]. CB1 and CB2 receptors (Figure-1) are distributed throughout the central and peripheral nervous systems [2-57-58-117]. "In the brain, these receptors are located in the brain stem, cerebral cortex, hippocampus, cerebellum, basal ganglia, hypothalamus, and amygdala [2-57-58]. They are also found in the liver, kidneys, spleen, gonads, and heart [2-57-58-117]. Δ^9 -tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is what's known as a partial agonist at both CB1 and CB2 receptors, meaning that it can partially bind to both receptor sites [2-57-58-117]. The psychoactive effects for which Δ^9 - tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is famed arise from its affinity for the CB1 receptor [2-57-58-65-111]. The key endocannabinoids include anandamide (AEA; N-arachidonylethanolamide),

2-arachidonoylglycerol (2-AG), N-arachidonoyl dopamine (NADA), and rhodamine (O-arachidonoyl ethanolamide) [2-58-100]. Together with the CB1 and CB2 receptors, uptake mechanisms, and associated metabolic enzymes, these lipid-derived signaling molecules constitute the ECS, a complex and highly conserved neuromodulator network involved in regulating a wide array of physiological processes [2-57-58-103].

THC exhibits a high binding affinity for cannabinoid receptors [57-58-110]. Activation of CB1 by THC is responsible for its psychoactive effects, manifesting as alterations in perception, mood, and anxiety, whereas CB2 activation is implicated in the regulation of inflammatory processes and immune function [2-30-58]. In contrast, CBD displays a relatively low binding affinity for both CB1 and CB2 receptors [2-30-58-68]. It functions as a negative allosteric modulator at the CB1 receptor, thereby attenuating the psychoactive effects of THC [2-30-59].

The defining feature of phytocannabinoids is their capacity to interact with the ECS, a complex network comprising endocannabinoids (e.g., anandamide, 2- arachidonoylglycerol), their receptors, uptake transporters, and associated metabolic enzymes responsible for synthesis and degradation [2-30-61]. The ECS plays a crucial role in maintaining systemic homeostasis, influencing diverse physiological processes, including nociception, appetite, immune responses, emotional regulation, and cardiovascular function [2-34-110]. Phytocannabinoids modulate the ECS via distinct mechanisms. THC acts as a partial agonist at CB1 and CB2 receptors, while CBD inhibits the enzymatic degradation of endocannabinoids, thereby increasing endogenous levels of anandamide and 2-AG [2-30-58-70]. This elevation may lead to physiological effects such as peripheral vasodilation or compensatory tachycardia [2-30-58-115]. CBD demonstrates a wide range of biological activities through interactions with multiple receptor systems, much of the supporting evidence is derived from *in vitro* or animal model studies [2-30-58].

CB2 has emerged as a modulator of cardiovascular health, exerting potent anti- inflammatory and osteoprotective effects while avoiding the psychotropic activity Assoc acted with CB1 activation [2-46-76]. Mechanistically, CB2 counteracts pro-atherogenic processes by modulating key signaling pathways [2-30-58]. In human monocytes, CB2 agonists downregulate chemokine receptors (CCR1, CCR2) and adhesion molecules, thereby reducing chemotaxis toward CCL2 and CCL3[2-30-58]. Furthermore, CB2 activation promotes the polarization of anti- inflammatory macrophages, downregulates NF-KB activity, and reduces the secretion of pro-inflammatory cytokines in foam cells [2-30-58]. In vascular smooth muscle cells, CB2 stimulation mitigates TNF- α -induced proliferation and migration via MAPK/ERK and PI3K/Akt signaling [2-30-58].

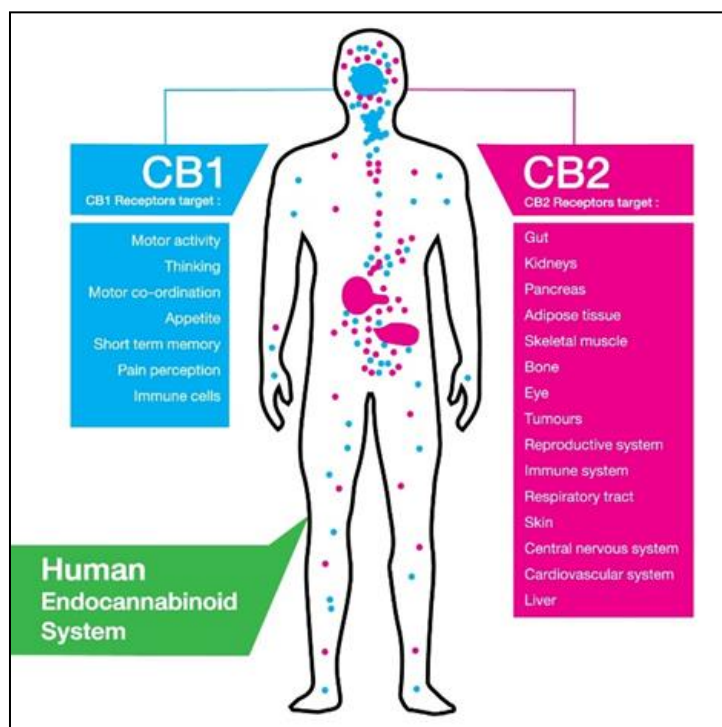


Figure 1 Human Endocannabinoid system (ECS) with CB1 and CB2 receptors

3. Heart Failure (HF): Role of Cannabidiol (CBD)

Heart failure (HF) remains a major clinical and public health problem [58-75-117]. Heart disease is the leading cause of death worldwide, with heart failure (HF) recognized as its most severe and debilitating manifestation [59-79-117]. Heart failure (HF) is characterized by energy deprivation, calcium (Ca^{2+}) handling alterations, and inflammation: effects associated with mitochondrial dysfunction [58-90-117]. Heart failure is a pathological condition in which the heart is unable to pump enough blood to the rest of the body, because it is either unable to fill with a sufficient volume of blood or unable to generate sufficient force to pump out enough blood; it is not a condition in which the heart has stopped pumping [59-79-117]. Heart failure (HF), also known as congestive heart failure (CHF), is a complex clinical syndrome characterized by the heart's inability to pump blood effectively due to structural or functional impairments [59-79-117]. The most common cause of HF is ischemic heart disease, but other factors, such as hypertension, valvular disease, and myocarditis, also contribute to its development [79-117]. Heart failure (HF) is classified based on left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF) and clinical staging [59-79-117]. Common symptoms of HF include shortness of breath, fatigue, fluid retention, and edema. Heart failure (HF) progression is characterized by progressive fibrosis, inflammation, decreased contractile function and relaxation, as well as apoptosis [59-79-117]. Approximately half of all heart failure cases are attributed to reduced left ventricular systolic function—classified as heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFREF) [58-79-117]. Current guideline-directed medical therapy has markedly improved survival and quality of life for patients with HFREF [60-79-117]. The current management of HFREF requires the initiation and fast up-titration of the four pillars, namely a renin-angiotensin system inhibitor (RAS-i), a beta blocker, a mineralocorticoid receptor antagonist (MRA) and a sodium/glucose cotransporter 2 inhibitor (SGLT2) [59-79-117]. Historically, when conventional treatment of HF was mainly diuretics and digoxin, the CONSENSUS trial showed that RAS-i, namely Enalapril, was able to reduce by 40% all-cause mortality at 6 months [59-79-117]. Since then, RAS-i became one of the foundations of HF treatment [58-79-117].

One of the studies by García-Rivas et al., (2025) [57] demonstrated that cannabidiol (CBD) offers cardio protection in a HF mouse model induced by L-NAME and ANGII administration [57]. The results of this study by García-Rivas et al., (2025) [57] showed improved cardiac function and reduced cardiac hypertrophy, remodeling, inflammation, and cell death. In cardiomyocytes from the HF model, cannabidiol restored cell shortening, which was linked to improved calcium (Ca^{2+}) handling [57]. Additionally, it helped preserve cellular oxidative status, mitochondrial bioenergetics, and notably, modulated $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$ overload by affecting MCU expression [57]. This suggests that the cardioprotective effects of cannabidiol are caused by the preservation of excitation-contraction-energetic coupling [57]. The identified cellular mechanisms through which cannabidiol exerts its cardioprotective effects include reducing oxidative stress and the activation of PPAR- γ , which helps prevent mitochondrial dysfunction by decreasing MCU hyperactivity [57]. Cannabidiol previously prevented mitochondrial dysfunction [57]. Thus, it may prevent HF progression [57]. In mice with HF, subcutaneous cannabidiol attenuated cardiac fibrosis, hypertrophy, loss of ejection fraction, and inflammation; isolated cardiomyocytes preserved cell shortening, (Ca^{2+}) handling, mitochondrial function and redox balance [57]. Hypertrophied ventricular cardio myoblasts suggested cannabidiol-mediated effects through peroxisome proliferator-activated gamma receptors [57]. Therefore, cannabidiol in HF limited cardiac hypertrophy and preserved contractile function by sustaining cardiomyocyte and mitochondrial function through redox balance maintenance, supporting cannabidiol role as a cardioprotective therapy in HF [57].

Cannabidiol (CBD) and other phytocannabinoids are gaining attention for their therapeutic potential in cardiovascular disease (CVD), the world's leading cause of death [57-79-117]. Evidence also supports the activation of CB2 in heart failure models. Agonists enhance diastolic function, mitigate ventricular remodeling, and suppress the expression of genes associated with fibrosis. Such effects are partly mediated through suppression of ROS generation, upregulation of nuclear factor erythroid 2-related factor 2 (Nrf2), and inhibition of caspase activation, collectively contributing to cardiomyocyte survival and mitochondrial stability [57-79-117]. Cannabidiol (CBD) exerts complex and pleiotropic actions through interactions with a range of molecular targets, including ECS receptors, non-cannabinoid receptors, and redox-sensitive transcription factors. In particular, increasing evidence indicates the beneficial effects of Cannabidiol (CBD) on the cardiovascular system [57-79-117]. Those effects include suppression of pro-inflammatory cytokine release, inhibition of macrophage activation, and attenuation of oxidative stress [56]. Such mechanisms contribute to the potential reduction in risk and progression of conditions such as atherosclerosis, arterial hypertension, and heart failure [57]. Although exogenous cannabidiol (CBD) may not precisely replicate the effects of endogenous cannabinoids, its regulatory influence on the cardiovascular system is evident [57-79-117]. CBD may improve endothelial function, reduce heart rate, and exert cardioprotective effects during stress exposure (possibly associated with anxiolytic effects), partially through modulation of autonomic tone and reduction in sympathetic drive [57-79-117].

Now a days, cannabidiol (CBD) has garnered attention for its vasodilatory, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant effects on cardiovascular health [59-79-117]. With this growing body of evidence and focused scientific interest, it is essential

to contextualize these findings within the broader landscape of cardiovascular disease (CVD). García-Rivas et al (2025) [57] provided valuable insight by isolating the impact of the non-intoxicating cannabinoid, cannabidiol (CBD), on adverse cardiac remodeling in a murine model of heart failure [93-117]. The authors showed that 4 weeks of CBD administration prevents the progression of heart failure, with experiments linking in vivo cardiac function to molecular origins, through the intermediary processes of cellular energy production and inflammatory signaling[93]. Furthermore, the therapeutic potential of CBD shown by García-Rivas et al., (2025) [57] does not stand alone, because cannabidiol (CBD) has been demonstrated to reduce blood pressure in humans, adding to its therapeutic potential in heart failure [57, 58 93]. Overall, current evidence supports cannabidiol (CBD) promise as an adjunct in cardiovascular disease (CVD) treatment, but broader clinical use requires more rigorous, large-scale studies [57, 58, 93]. Ulric et al., (2025) [58] are of the opinion that cannabinoids have not yet reached clinical maturity for broad implementation in cardiovascular therapeutics, the underlying scientific evidence is promising, and preliminary findings are encouraging [58]. Bridging the translational gap prudently will demand methodologically rigorous, multidisciplinary research efforts, ensuring that any future clinical claims are grounded in robust human evidence [58].

4. Conclusion

Cannabidiol (CBD) and other phytocannabinoids are gaining attention for their therapeutic potential in cardiovascular disease (CVD), the world's leading cause of death. Heart failure (HF) is characterized by energy deprivation, calcium (Ca²⁺) handling alterations, and inflammation: effects associated with mitochondrial dysfunction. Common symptoms of HF include shortness of breath, fatigue, fluid retention, and edema. Heart failure (HF) progression is characterized by progressive fibrosis, inflammation, decreased contractile function and relaxation, as well as apoptosis. One of current evidence supports cannabidiol (CBD) promise as an adjunct in cardiovascular disease (CVD) treatment, but broader clinical use requires more rigorous, large-scale studies. However, cannabinoids have not yet reached clinical maturity for broad implementation in cardiovascular therapeutics. One of the most pressing issues is the translational gap between experimental findings and clinical application.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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