



Cannabis and the FASD Brain: Weighing Relief against Risk

“Finding the Balance Between Healing and Harm”

For many adults living with **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**, cannabis is more than a recreational choice—it’s a self-managed therapy for challenges like anxiety, poor sleep, or chronic pain. But how does cannabis actually affect the FASD brain? And are the benefits worth the risks?

Led by **Professor Mansfield Mela**, this pioneering study titled “**Exploring the Effects of Cannabis on Adults with FASD**” is the first of its kind to explore **both** the potential therapeutic effects **and** the possible harms of cannabis use in adults diagnosed with FASD.

The research team is:

- **Mapping Use Patterns** – Documenting how often, how much, and what types of cannabis (including THC and CBD) are used by adults with FASD.
- **Measuring Brain & Life Impacts** – Assessing cognitive abilities, daily functioning, and quality of life in users.
- **Tracking Safety** – Monitoring adverse events such as hospital visits, psychotic episodes, or accidents over six months, and comparing these rates to similar adults without FASD.
- **Laying a Research Foundation** – Generating critical data to guide future clinical trials and medical advice tailored to neurodevelopmental differences.

By uncovering how cannabis interacts with the unique neurocognitive profile of FASD, this study aims to **inform safer use, guide healthcare decisions, and protect vulnerable adults**—while also exploring whether cannabis can play a legitimate role in improving their well-being.