

Hemp as treatment for COVID-19 topic of Dec. 6 Oregon State Science Pub talk (with video)

November 25, 2022



Using natural products such as hemp to treat COVID-19 will be the topic of Oregon State University's Science Pub event at 6 p.m. Dec. 6.

The free event, which can be attended in person at the Old World Deli in Corvallis or viewed online, will feature a presentation by Richard van Breemen, a professor of pharmaceutical sciences at Oregon State. The presentation is titled “Natural products and hemp: Under-appreciated sources for

COVID-19 therapeutic agents.”

Earlier this year, van Breemen and a team of researchers identified hemp compounds that show the ability to prevent the virus that causes COVID-19 from entering human cells. The researchers found that a pair of cannabinoid acids bind to the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein, blocking a critical step in the process the virus uses to infect people.

The findings were published in the Journal of Natural Products and set records for downloads and online views, and were covered by more than 400 news agencies around the world.

While natural products account for about half of all drugs currently in use, van Breemen said natural drug discovery research is not a priority of major pharmaceutical companies and federal funding agencies.

Hemp is a particularly rich source of unique natural products, many of which have pharmacological activity, van Breemen said. Propagation of hemp was prohibited in the U.S. from 1936 until 2014, and he said many restrictions remain in effect.

With the passage of the U.S. Farm Bill in 2014, hemp cultivation and hemp-based products grew. The COVID-19 pandemic inspired a surge in natural products research for the discovery of new antiviral agents, and several laboratories around the world, including van Breemen's, reported that certain cannabinoids from hemp exhibit anti-SARS-CoV-2 activity.

Registration is required to attend Science Pub [in person](#) or to view it [online](#).

Sponsors of Science Pub include the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Old World Deli, Oregon State Research Office and Oregon State University.

About Oregon State University: *As one of only three universities in the nation designated as a land, sea, space and sun grant institution, Oregon State serves Oregon and the world by working on today's most pressing issues. Our more than 35,000 students come from across the globe, and our programs operate in every Oregon county. Oregon State receives more research funding than all of the state's comprehensive public universities combined. At our campuses in Corvallis and Bend, marine research center in Newport and top-ranked Ecampus online degree programs, we excel at shaping today's students into tomorrow's leaders.*