

# THE THERAPEUTIC USE OF CANNABIS

## OVERVIEW

Nobody should stay ignorant today of what the Cannabis plant can make for our wellbeing due to a lack of information of what the discovery of the Endocannabinoid System has meant for the integral health of us all.

We live in a world where all kinds of information run free online, however there are some subjects that require a clear and calm explanation, where the interested person can expose his or her particular problem as well as their fears and doubts to the well trained doctor in this specialty, and who in turn, can transmit in the more convenient way the information that he considers appropriate for each person.

Medical cannabis use forms part of the Integrative medicine practice, where the different levels of treatment and the different ways of administration can be adjusted to the different conditions that each patient has and for which he or she desires to try Cannabis as an adjuvant.

If dosage is respected and well minded, Cannabis will always serve us well in one way or another. Even what is known as recreational use can be beneficial, as long as it

is in the hands of adults that know why, when and how they take it. But as with anything else, Cannabis can be abused too, and when it is abused in one way or another, it will be pushed too far from its therapeutic action and some sort of imbalance will follow, either as an acute or chronic state.

We have now more than a decade of supportive objective evidence for a clinical endocannabinoid deficiency as a plausible explanation for many ailments, and a deficiency has been proved for migraines.

When you take Cannabis for medical reasons, you take only as much as you need to feel well or better. And you don't escalate it unless you are searching for your therapeutic dose. Once you've found it, you will stay there.

The only psychotropic cannabinoid from the plant, THC, has some specific indications for medical use, like cancer and pain, but because of its high affinity for the CB1 receptors, and the fact that this receptor can join with the serotonin receptor 5-HTA2 which is responsible for the psychedelic experience, including the amnesic effect, it must be used always in a "micro dose" approach and together with the non psychotropic cannabinoid CBD that will modulate THC.

## The four levels of Medical cannabis use

So the first level of Medical Cannabis use is **level 0**, where there is not a specific physical ailment that we want to treat, rather, we seek an spiritual balance, a general good mind and body feeling; but at the same time knowing that when we take it, it works as a preventive medicine that will correct any perturbation that we may be inadvertently going through. Generally, for this level of use, we take the smallest dosages and preferably at night.

Next level of Cannabis use is **level 1**, where generally minor conditions manifest, and where the first signs of inflammation appear, this is the level where stress, insomnia, anxiety and worried mind, show themselves up. Usually the doses for this level are the same or slightly higher than for level 0 and also taken at night mostly.

**Level 2** is where signs and symptoms appear that cause more discomfort, with the classic triad of the proposed theory of an endocannabinoid system deficiency like migraines, fibromyalgia and irritable bowel syndrome, all three are hyperalgesic states where inflammation has escalated as have also the anxiety, stress and depression. Doses are higher here, and it is common that the patients take their cannabis more than one time per day.

**Level 3** is for every other major or sufficiently bad condition, both physical and psychological, aside from the main neurodegenerative diseases and cancer, which belong to level 4. This is a vast territory filled with conditions so different as neuropathic pain, Post Traumatic Stress disorder, Autistic spectrum disorders, Major depression, Diabetes complications, Autoimmune dermatological pathologies, Multiple Sclerosis, Epilepsy and any other process resulting from a chronic or acute inflammation, like bone healing after a fracture. Dosage is even higher and patients are told to try and escalate them until they find their therapeutic threshold. Most take cannabis two or three times per day, and it is not uncommon for THC to be used for many conditions in this level.

Finally, **level 4** of medical use is for Cancer of any type and stage and for the major Neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis and Alzheimer Disease, among others. At this stage, the patients accept their diagnosis and prognosis and usually are in the hands of others rather than themselves, this makes it quite difficult to bring them to a full potency cannabis treatment regime, where in some cases, like with cancer, there is enough evidence to support its use, while in the rest, evidence is still lacking as a curing option, though it may help with symptoms and progression of disease.

Because the ECS operates as a homeostatic regulator, it is crucial to understand that it requires gentle pharmacological enforcement when working with agonists such as THC, and this is best achieved when we use full spectrum cannabis extracts that because they contain additional synergistic and buffering components like CBD and terpenoids, allows for the entourage effect to take place.

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