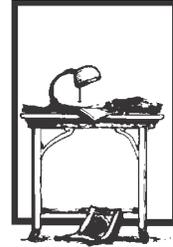

EDITORIAL



The *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics* is proud to initiate its fourth year of publication with this issue, but regrets that it will be its last, as explained below.

In this final issue, we are pleased to present additional data on cannabinoid delivery and harm reduction. Dale Gieringer et al. present the first scientific analysis of results obtained with the Volcano[®], a cannabis vaporizer device. The success of such technologies may address a key recommendation of the U.S. Institute of Medicine in its emphasis on non-smoked cannabis delivery systems.

Franjo Grotenhermen provides another extensive review article, this time on cannabinoid pharmacodynamics, to complement his previous offerings on cannabinoid pharmacokinetics.

Tod Mikuriya documents his extensive clinical experience in use of cannabis in treating alcoholism, an indication first claimed in the 19th century. Although sure to be controversial, this concept is one that deserves additional study considering the compelling public health issues and considerable cost to society. New approaches employing cannabinoid mechanisms may prove fruitful in providing alternatives to current treatment of this disorder

JOURNAL OF CANNABIS THERAPEUTICS: A REQUIEM

It is with great regret, but sense of pride, that we now “close the book” on this journal and allow it to stand on its previous offerings. This

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represents a decision that has been very difficult, but considered after extensive consultation with numerous editorial board members. I would like to outline the issues we have faced, the background of this decision, and review the accomplishments of the journal in its history.

A History of Our Goals

The *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics* began as an idea advanced by Lester Grinspoon upon our first meeting in Washington, DC in November 1998. I immediately saw the logic of his concept: a place to publish the emerging abundance of information about clinical cannabis, the newly discovered endocannabinoid system that modulates so many vital physiological functions, as well as explore the clinical potential of synthetic cannabinoids. We envisioned a publication that would highlight the developing science, and hopefully serve as an educational resource for physicians and scientists, as well as interested members of the lay public.

I seized upon Lester's idea, and advanced it to my friend, mentor and editor of the Haworth Herbal Press, the late Dr. Varro (Tip) Tyler, who paid it and me the ultimate compliment, by saying that it was an idea whose time had come, but he would only support it if I were to be its Editor-in-Chief. Next to consult was Bill Cohen, the president and publisher of Haworth Press. He was wisely skeptical, but agreed to educate himself on the issue. To his surprise, the available information convinced him of the distinct advisability to proceed. Within three weeks, the idea became a concept. Bill's subsequent support has been unwavering.

Very quickly, a distinguished group of physicians and scientists agreed to take part as a core editorial advisory. A perusal of our contingent, 24 strong, reads as a "Who's Who" of influential authorities and authors in the area. Again, many voiced doubts, but agreed to lend their support. To their great credit, there have been no defections from their ranks in the life of the journal.

From the beginning, I set a number of goals. I felt from the onset that the journal should establish itself or cease publication after three years. We have just crossed that threshold, but barely. I naively thought at the time that *JCANT* might be rendered superfluous within this time-frame by a widespread acceptance of the concept of clinical cannabis. That, obviously, will take a little longer.

A key benchmark I set was for building a subscriber base of 1,000 or more. Another was acceptance of the journal in major university librar-

ies. Finally, was the gold standard: we sought recognition by Index Medicus for that critical accolade of acceptance for listing in that publication and the National Library of Medicine database.

We also wanted to be a home for expansive concepts and discussions on the topics of cannabis and cannabinoids—the kind of articles that would never gain acceptance in “mainstream” medical journals. Annual thematic double-issues would be co-published in book form.

Obstacles and Realities

After a year of planning, and gathering material, *JCANT*'s charter issue was released in early 2001, to critical surprise and reward. Subsequently, numerous copies were circulated at major meetings, to numerous compliments, including two letters of thanks from members of the US Supreme Court as they were considering the landmark Oakland Cannabis Buyers' Club case. I will treasure those.

Advance subscriptions were respectable in number, but despite the endorsements, rose but slowly over time. Our 2001 thematic issue became *Cannabis Therapeutics in HIV/AIDS*, which remains today the only book of its kind beyond the late Bob Randall's 1991 *Marijuana & AIDS*. More acclaim followed, but the subscriber numbers did not follow suit, nor approach our goal. North American physicians have been particularly slow to familiarize themselves with the new literature, and to attempt to understand what has motivated their patients to employ clinical cannabis, frequently without their knowledge or endorsement.

In 2002, we employed a generous grant from the Marijuana Policy Project to attempt to enter the realm of medical libraries. Free sample issues were offered to every such facility in the USA and Canada. Few actual subscriptions resulted. A reality of modern publishing is that such institutions have little shelf-space, and much sparser budgets for the new. Even the University of Montana asked me, “What current journal should be abandoned to make room for this offering?” Mass mailings were met with similar ennui.

The year was capped off with our second thematic issue, *Women and Cannabis: Medicine, Science and Sociology*, ably co-edited by Melanie Dreher and Mary Lynn Mathre. Once more, it was a unique offering on a previously taboo topic.

A similar scenario played out in 2003: critical acclaim and encouragement, but little advancement in subscriber base over a few hundred. Our initial application for Index Medicus recognition was turned aside negatively. The quest for double-blind controlled studies, the gold-stand-

dard of current medical proof, continued, but quite expectedly, the small numbers of available studies were placed in better-recognized large circulation publications. This is right and proper; the cannabinoid field has grown and matured dramatically since the inception of *JCANT* and these new concepts deserve immediate attention by professionals and medical consumers. I endorse the decision by the authors of these articles to seek wider recognition of their work, as is currently taking place with vaporizer research pioneered by Dale Gieringer with support from MAPS.

The 2003 volume was completed with our last thematic issue: *Cannabis: From Pariah to Prescription*, that documents the current state of the art with respect to phytocannabinoids, endogenous and synthetic cannabinoids, and advances our knowledge thereof as the first products approach marketing and acceptance in Europe.

By this time, a critical juncture was reached. Although the threshold of prescription clinical cannabinoids as a reality was nearing, the available pool of articles that would advance the knowledge and might lead to greater recognition has diminished. Prospects for additional database listing seem less than promising, and subscriber numbers have not risen despite additional grants-in-aid.

A Personal Note

I am experiencing some major life transitions at this time: moving our household and leaving neurology practice after 20 years to accept a position as Senior Medical Advisor to GW Pharmaceuticals. I had voiced my personal concerns about possible conflicts of interest with the publisher and numerous editorial board members, and was most pleased with their reassurances and vote of confidence. That, ultimately, has had no bearing on the decision to cease publication at a time when *JCANT* has maintained its quality on a consistent basis, rather than witness its possible diminution over time.

Our Accomplishments

I believe that the *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics* has, in its short sojourn, advanced knowledge and acceptance of this emerging field. We have gained notice beyond the apparent subscriber numbers. Although *JCANT* may not have influenced the Supreme Court to accept clinical cannabis, our articles have been cited in major national commissions, including *A Report of the National Commission on Ganja* in

Jamaica in 2001 (<http://www.drugtext.org/library/reports/ganjamaica.htm>), and even more prominently in *Cannabis: Our Position for a Canadian Public Policy*, the report of the Canadian Senate in 2002 (http://www.parl.gc.ca/Common/Committee_SenRecentReps.asp?Language=E&Parl=37&Ses=1). Both commissions strongly endorsed greater public access to clinical cannabis.

I was very pleased that our lead article of volume 1, number 1, was a review of the current state of cannabis therapeutics as conceived by Leo Hollister, the American dean of scientific study of the herb, but was saddened that it came to be his final publication. Another landmark of the inaugural edition was the study of Musty and Rossi describing the success of smoked cannabis in allaying nausea in several hundred subjects in state-sponsored studies of previous decades that had never before been published (for both, see link to *JCANT* 1(1) below).

Innovative articles on therapeutic possibilities of cannabis and cannabinoids followed, including music appreciation, an examination of ancient and ethnobotanical evidence, and many more. Surveys of clinical cannabis use in various countries were offered, as well as closer examinations of non-cannabinoid components, endogenous cannabinoids, and novel delivery systems. Volume 2 saw the publication of the “Chronic Use Study” in which, for the first time, information was made available concerning the benefits and side effects of cannabis for a small cohort of legal patients in the US Compassionate Use Investigational New Drug Program (see link below). This study has had an influence far beyond the subscriber base, and has led to many associated news stories and publicity about the issues.

Further evolutionary ideas concerning cannabis were provided by many authors. Volume 3 continued in a similar vein, with more information on use surveys, vaporization technology, pharmacokinetics, and the advent of cannabis-based medicine extracts and oro-mucosal delivery.

THE FUTURE

I envision that the fields of cannabis and cannabinoid therapeutics will flourish in the coming decade as our understanding of the key role of endogenous mechanisms unfolds, and governments slowly accept the wisdom that these medicines can play a major role in alleviating human suffering from legion complaints. The advancement of that concept should properly occur in venues with greatest accessibility and

visibility, and I will be working toward that goal. I hope and expect to continue to publish review material in book form with the continued largesse and support of The Haworth Press.

Franjo Grotenhermen, the founder and president of the International Association of Cannabis as Medicine, has graciously agreed to expand the *IACM-Bulletin* (<http://www.acmed.org/english/home.htm>) so that topical reviews and new ideas that might not see publication in mainstream sources will have an outlet.

We will make further efforts to ensure that the useful legacies of the *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics* will endure and be accessible. Currently, portions of the content are available online:

- Charter Issue, *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics* 1(1), 2001 ([http://www.cannabis-med.org/jcant/Jcant\(1\).pdf](http://www.cannabis-med.org/jcant/Jcant(1).pdf))
- *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics* articles by Ethan Russo:
- Hemp for Headache ([http://www.cannabis-med.org/jcant/Jcant1\(1\).pdf](http://www.cannabis-med.org/jcant/Jcant1(1).pdf))
- McPartland/Russo: Cannabis and Cannabis Extracts: Greater than the Sum of Their Parts? (<http://www.montananorml.org/docs/McPartland-Russo-JCANT-1-3-4-2001.pdf>)
- Chronic Use Study (http://www.cannabis-med.org/jcant/russo_chronic_use.pdf)
- Cannabis in OB/GYN (<http://www.freedomtoexhale.com/russo-ob.pdf>)

We will secure additional availability of *Journal of Cannabis Therapeutics* content at intervals after publication as time progresses. Eventually, we would essay to have the entire body of the work available electronically to all interested people.

In closing, I would like to thank Lester for his idea, Tip for his support that has sustained me beyond his passing, Bill for his enduring encouragement, Dale Gieringer, Franjo Grotenhermen, John McPartland for their multitudinous submissions, GW Pharmaceuticals for their commitment to the future of cannabinoid therapeutics, and all the remaining board members and subscribers for their attention and largesse. For this, I am extremely grateful.

Ethan Russo, MD
Editor