



International Association for Cannabinoid Medicines (IACM)
Am Mildeweg 6
D-59602 Rütten
Germany
Phone: +49 (0)2952-970 85 71
Fax: +49 (0)2952-90 26 51
E-mail: info@cannabis-med.org

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Statement on Medical Cannabis by the IACM for the European Parliament

Dear esteemed member of the European Parliament,

We are European members of the Board of Directors of the IACM (International Association for Cannabinoid Medicines). We are basic researchers working in laboratories at universities and clinicians working in a medical practice or at a University.

In our laboratories we investigate the broad therapeutic potential of cannabis compounds and related molecules and in our medical practices we see how many seriously ill people benefit from a treatment with cannabis-based medicines. The spectrum of diseases ranges from chronic pain of various origins to chronic inflammatory diseases, from neurological disorders to diseases associated with loss of appetite or nausea, from psychiatric conditions to many other medical conditions.

For many patients single cannabinoids, such as dronabinol and cannabidiol as well as standardised and approved cannabis-based medicines, work very well. What we have learned over the years of research and of our work with patients is the fact, that different patients profit better from certain cannabis strains than from others. This is true for both, for the desired therapeutic effects and for the side effects.

For many years scientists and doctors thought that cannabis is more or less a plant, which exerts its effects by THC and a little bit by CBD. That is what many scientists and doctors still think today. But this is an error, an incorrect simplification of the reality. A study of this month is a good example that this is not only a subjective feeling of many patients and experienced physicians. Cannabis extracts rich in THC or CBD were more effective in an animal model of graft versus host disease, a serious adverse event after bone marrow transplantation, than isolated THC or CBD alone (Khujja, et al. 2019).

Cannabis is a rich source of treatment possibilities. As clinicians we do not want to miss all the possibilities that this plant is offering to us and our colleagues to bring this whole richness to our patients.

The question of cannabis as medicine is not so much about a drug as about two basic principles of a civilised society.

The first principle is that patients should receive the best possible therapy.

The second principle is that doctors, scientists and government institutions should work for the benefit of the citizens. Only then can they fulfil their duty.

We understand that the European Parliament would like to ease the access to cannabis and cannabinoids for medicinal purposes. And we heartily welcome these efforts. We think that Europeans should have access to the best medical treatments. Please allow doctors and patients to profit from the broad spectrum of the therapeutic effects of the cannabis plant. Please do not limit these treatment options to a few.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Franjo Grotenhermen
Executive Director of the IACM
Principal of Nova Institute, Huerth, Germany
Medical practice, Ruethen, Germany

Dr Manuel Guzmán
Chairman of the IACM
Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Complutense University, Madrid, Spain

Professor Kirsten R. Müller-Vahl
Assistant Medical Director
Clinic of Psychiatry, Socialpsychiatry and Psychotherapy
Hannover Medical School, Germany

Professor Roger G. Pertwee MA, DPhil, DSc, (Oxford) HonFBPhS
Institute of Medical Sciences
University of Aberdeen, Scotland, UK

Dr Ethan Russo
Director of Research and Development
International Cannabis and Cannabinoids Institute, Czech Republic

Literature:

Khuja I, Yekhtin Z, Or R, Almogi-Hazan O. Cannabinoids Reduce Inflammation but Inhibit Lymphocyte Recovery in Murine Models of Bone Marrow Transplantation. *Int J Mol Sci.* 2019;20(3).