

## Editorial: A landmark and a new era

**WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION** of the *Canadian Journal of Medical Cannabis*.

This journal, which is among the very first worldwide publications for physicians regarding the clinical study of cannabinoid usage on human health, debuts in Canada in the year 2019. Both the nation of origin and the date of the foundation are significant.

Famously, Canada last year became the first economically developed country to make cannabis available to the public for both therapeutic and “adult use” or recreational purposes. During the ensuing months, the social, political, and commercial implications of this liberalized policy implementation continue to be discussed, often vigorously. Each day brings new reportage and interpretations of events, as the provinces and territories accept the integration of cannabis use into the mainstream and adjust to the subsequent new realities.

To this point, many constituencies—including but not limited to politicians, landlords, law enforcement professionals, retail employees, zoning committee chairs, pastors, and parents—have been free to form views and assume positions based largely on their own criteria.

Physicians and healthcare practitioners can’t share that indulgence. We offer treatment recommendations based on unyielding and non-objective factors such as guidelines and evidence—and both are in scant supply when the subject is the therapeutic use of cannabinoids.

Many colleagues and several medical associations are on record as being profoundly skeptical as to the health benefits or curative properties of cannabis and its components. Others have expressed enthusiasm to the extent of assisting the opening of clinics intended to treat pain and other chronic conditions with cannabinoid agents, or adapting their practices to accommodate emerging patient preferences.

Most physicians, we estimate, would remain open-minded and somewhere in the middle on this topic. There are anecdotal reports concerning the successful use of cannabinoids as treatment for a variety of conditions, and, conversely, few conventional trials offering conclusive evidence to support the observational reports. No practitioner deserving of their patients’ trust would risk proposing anything other than an optimal standard of care. And yet, “optimal” is a phrase that may be imprecise, especially when other factors are allowed for, such as several associated with long-term regimens of pharmaceutical products.

This situation strongly suggests the need for more and better investigation, and close and cautious study. It calls for a new journal—and, with that, a new type of journal. Ideally, the new journal will be curious but not credulous, willing to

consider new ideas without abandoning the necessary rigor, able to contextualize while paying all due attention to the intersections of medicine. Ideally, the new journal will combine the immediacy and democracy of an open-source journal, with the credibility and authority of an indexed and peer-reviewed journal (with aspirations toward the latter).

Hence, the *Canadian Journal of Medical Cannabis* (CJMC).

Our intent, once each quarter, is to gather and assess information, and facilitate clinical discussion among healthcare practitioners on practical issues concerning patient care. The CJMC will curate scientific information as disseminated in the global literature and invite accompanying commentary from eminent discussants. We will also publish original survey articles devoted to the use of cannabinoids in different medical diseases and disorders. (Dr. Sheldon Pollack’s thorough review on cannabinoids in skincare initiates this series beginning on page 22 of this issue.) Eventually, it is our aim that the CJMC will become a recognized source of worldwide studies and trials from academics and clinicians, utilizing real-world evidence and real-world data.

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Toward that end, we sincerely and humbly invite you to participate in this project. To simplify interaction, we offer our online portal (<http://www.cjmc.ca>), which will provide the opportunity to advance the dialogue among peers. The editors of the CJMC are also preparing the first of what will become a regular symposium series on Real-world Evidence and Real-world Data in Medical Cannabis. More information on this Autumn 2019 event will be available shortly and will be posted to [www.cjmc.ca](http://www.cjmc.ca).

For now, from your editors, we are content to let the content of this first issue speak for itself. Once you have spent some time with this edition, please don’t hesitate to be in touch to share your thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and experiences. As with any communications medium, this undertaking will require a group effort. We are eager to accelerate the process, and we look forward to getting to know you and learning from you. So, please do contact us at [cjmc\\_edit@gmx.ca](mailto:cjmc_edit@gmx.ca).

—Mark McElwain, CJMC Correspondent