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The use of cannabis for medical purposes has enormous potential, both for patients and for the medical professionals responsible for their care.

Cannabis is a remarkable plant. It contains over 100 cannabinoids, only two of which – cannabidiol (CBD) and delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) – currently find therapeutic use. CBD finds applications in the treatment of epilepsy, possibly also of cannabis dependence. It also has anti-inflammatory and anti-tumor properties, while THC has potential in the treatment of the symptoms of multiple sclerosis as well as a range of neurodegenerative and neurological disorders, including Tourette syndrome.

Medical cannabis also has the potential to help counter the current opioid epidemic. Acting on different pain pathways, it can complement the action of paracetamol as well as opiates, such as oxycodone and tramadol, and may thus help reduce the need for these analgesics.

When considering the therapeutic potential of cannabis for medical use, 3 factors should be borne in mind.

The first is that many of the patients using or requesting cannabis for medical purposes are desperate for help. The second is that the delivery modes currently available, such as oromucosal sprays, tablets, and drops, leave much to be desired, and that work needs to be done on developing more efficient and controllable modes of delivery such as creams and inhalers. And the third is that much more research is required in order to produce the evidence base that is essential for all good science, allowing the medical profession to unlock much more of the potential of the plant itself. Here, Big Data can play an important role, taking information that is already known to us and combining it in ways that deliver actionable information.

It is my hope that *Medical Cannabis and Cannabinoids* will promote research, stimulate thought, and deliver scientific evidence that will make it easier for patients to access the remarkable potential therapeutic benefits intrinsic to the cannabis plant on a fully legal and socially acceptable basis.