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The therapeutic effects of medical cannabis have been widely reported. These include antispastic, analgesic, antiemetic, neuroprotective and anti-inflammatory actions, among others. In my view, cannabinoids have considerable potential in the context of diseases whose exact treatment has not yet been established – for example, cachexia induced by HIV/AIDS and cancer as well as multiple sclerosis. The appropriate use of cannabinoids may be able to save the lives of many patients for whom therapies do not currently exist.

In the field of neuropsychopharmacology, cannabinoids have a therapeutic action in the context of psychiatric illnesses such as anxiety and depression. They also show promise in the treatment of neuropathic pain, including cancer pain.

Unfortunately, cannabinoids currently enjoy little acceptance as medical drugs in Japan. This is because many believe cannabinoids to be dangerous drugs and assume that serious side effects may be experienced when using cannabinoids for medical purposes. People who hold these views are unaware of the true clinical action of cannabinoids, and this lack of understanding is a significant barrier to the acceptance of the use of cannabinoids for medical purposes.

It is important to disseminate accurate and up-to-date knowledge about the nature and medical action of cannabinoids: appropriate education will lead to enlightenment, which will in turn pave the way to acceptance of their use for therapeutic purposes in Japan.

For this to happen, scientists and physicians working in this field must have access to the latest research into medical cannabis and cannabinoids, and must understand the positive potential of these substances. For example, the most common side effects of cannabinoids are tiredness and dizziness, certain psychological symptoms, and dryness of mouth. However, tolerance of these side effects nearly always develops within a short time. Furthermore, withdrawal symptoms seldom become a problem in the therapeutic use of cannabinoids.

The journal of *Medical Cannabis and Cannabinoids* will make valuable new insights from clinical and basic research available to a wide audience, presenting information that has been subjected to a stringent peer review process. I hope that this new publication will widen our understanding of the profound medical value of cannabinoids and will help to counter their current negative image.